

A
**DIVINE
MESSAGE
TO THE
ELECT SOUL.**

Delivered
In eight *SERMONS* upon
seven severall Texts.

By that laborious and faithfull Messenger of Christ,
WILLIAM FENNER, B.D. sometimes Fellow
of *Pembroke-Hall* in Cambridge, and late Mini-
ster of *Reckford* in *Essex*.

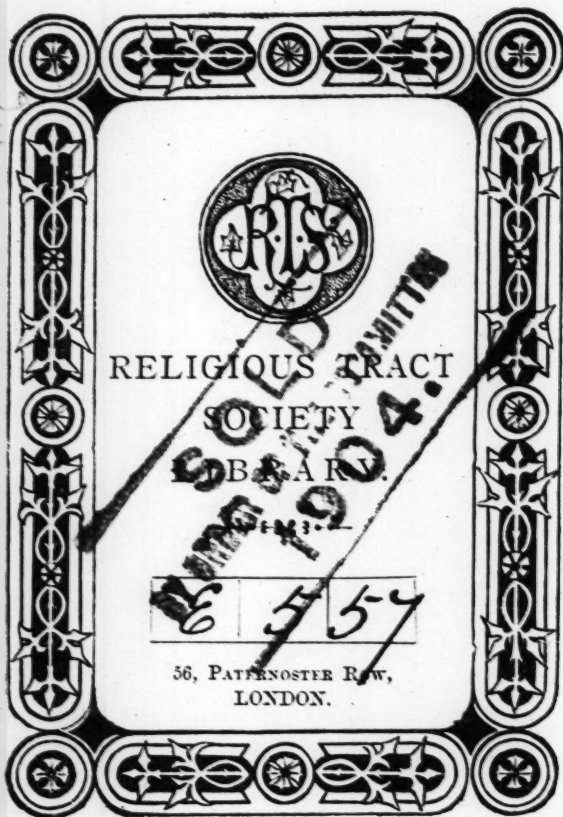
The fourth Edition, corrected and amended by
a worthy friend of the Authors.

Amos 4. v. 10, 12.

*I have sent you the Pestilence, after the manner of
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and have taken away your Horses, I have made the
stinke of the Camp to come up to your nostrils, yet
have ye not returned to me, saith the Lord: there-
fore thus will I doe unto thee, O Israel; and because
I will doe this unto thee, prepare to meet me thy God,
O Israel.*

Printed at London for *John Stafford*, and are to be
sold at his House in *George-yard* neer
Fleet-bridge, 1657.

280



RELIGIOUS
TRACT SOCIETY.

1489. t. 77

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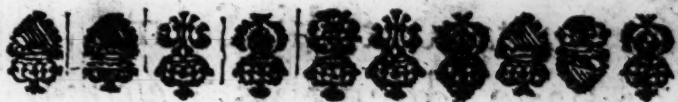
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The Epistle to the godly
Reader of these pious
Sermons:

THE Author of
these ensuing Ser-
mons, Master
William Fenner,
was so deservedly famous
in the Church of God, and
so well known unto mee
in particular, and one to
whom I was so much obli-
ged when he was living, as
that I could not think it
sufficient to give a bare
* * * *Im-*

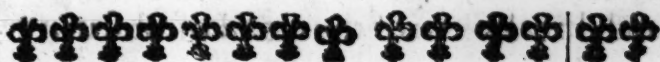
The Epistle, &c.

Imprimatur unto his Sermons,
but have added this *Testimo-*
ny also; that thereby all good
people might be encouraged
to read these *VV*orks of his,
whose life and conversation
was a continuall Sermon, and
who spent himself in Study-
ing and Preaching, and
whose memory will be ever
precious unto



Your loving friend,

Edm. Calamy.



TO THE READER.

Good Reader,

THe *Author* of these Sermons, having served his time, and being fallen asleep, The lot is fallen upon me to appear in their behalf, and to seal unto their worth and usefulness for publick service, as far as thou pleasest to seal unto my judgement and faithfulness in such a case, with thine opinion and approbation. For the truth is, that the strength and value of my testimony concerning them, is like to extend no further, than thine doth concerning me: So that if I adde any thing to their credit and estimation in the world, by my recommendation, it is by the mediation of thine ingenuity and fairness towards me. But if thou shalt please to be at any reasonable cost in the reading of them, and lay thy judgement and conscience as close to the Spirit, as thou must thine eyes to the letter of what thou readest, I make no question but I shall be the gainer, and not they, by this engagement of my self for them.

To the Reader.

True worth, especially when it overcomes and breaks out of the cloud of obscurity, alwaies returns more than what it receives from any mans testimony: neither is there any method or trade so proper or certain, whereby to raise an estate of honour and reputation to a mans self, as the bestowing or casting honour and reputation upon other, so he be carefull and dexterous in the choyce of his subject. *John Baptist* by giving testimony only to one, *Jesus Christ*, outgrew the common stature of those that are born of women, in true greatnesse, *Mat. 11. 11.* And yet there was little or nothing (in effect) added to *Jesus Christ* himself by his testimony, *Joh. 5. 34.* It is an ingenuous and inoffensive way to serve our selves out of other mens excellencies, by advancing them: neither do the generality of men in their practice, more generally consent upon any principle reason and equity, than this, To recompence such men with terms of honour, who are unpartiall and free in subscribing and acknowledging the worth and eminencie of others. And as many that are but of mean condition in the world otherwise, yet maintain themselves comfortably, by trimming and dressing the gardens

To the Reader.

Gardens and Orchards, and Vineyards of rich and wealthy men: so may men that want other perlonal abilities and excellencies of their own, subsist upon terms of a convenient reputation, only by vindicating, adorning, and setting forth the endowments & gracefull parts of other men.

The subject, or argument of these Sermons, is partly that noble and high importing strain of Christian devotion; Preparation for that solema enterview of Jesus Christ in his death, at his Table; The great severity of Gods proceedings against despisers of admonitions and reproof. Both theames of savoury consideration for all those that love not death; and more especially for those, who desire not only to be saved, but to be saved upon sweeter, and more comfortable terms than as by fire, 1 Cor. 3. 15. Those that were chastened with weaknesse, and sickness, and death amongst the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 11. 30. were yet saved, ver. 32. but this was as by or through fire; though they did not perish, were not consumed by the flames of Gods displeasure against them, yet they were sorely scorched with them, the smell of this fire was strong upon the garments of
* * 3 their

To the Reader.

their flesh: They discerned not the body of his Son Jesus Christ, in his ordinances; but in stead of that holy, reverend, and deep-studied behaviour, which was due unto it, both from their inner and outward man, as being a creature of the highest and deepest sanctification that ever God sanctified; Sanctified not only to a more excellent and glorious condition, but also to many ends and purposes of far higher and dearer concernment, both for the glory of God, and benefit of Men themselves, than all other creatures whatsoever, whether in heaven or in earth: They handled and dealt by it in both kinds, as if it had been but a common or un sanctified thing; thus they discerned not the Lords body. And as they discerned not his body, so neither did God (in some sense) discern theirs; but in those sore strokes and heavy judgements which he inflicted on them, had them in no other regard or consideration, than as if they had been the bodies of his enemies, the bodies of wicked and sinfull men; thus drawing the model and platform of their punishment (as usually he doth) from the structure and proportion of their sin. And if the moral or spiritual seeds and originals of

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of our outward and bodily afflictions, as sicknesses, and weaknesse, either upon our selves or ours, declining estates, losses, &c. (which still lye deeper than the naturall) were but carefully and narrowly sought out, it is much to be feared we should find a great part of them (at least) in the bowels of the same Sin so frequent amongst us, I mean, of *Not discerning the LORDS Body*. The just and righteous God builds up the breaches that we make upon the honour belonging to the body of his Sonne, with the ruines of that honour which he had given unto ours in health, strength, life, & many other outward comforts and supports. But thou wilt hear more of these things in the Sermons themselves: the wholesome Admonitions and Reproofs wherein contained, with the rest of that heavenly provision for thy Soul, which thou shalt find here gathered together, and laid into thy hand, I heartily wish may be sanctified unto thee by the highest hand of the Sanctifier; that so thy sins and corruptions may flye seven ways before that Spirit of power which here pursueth them, & thou never presume to return back again unto them more. The God whom

To the Reader.

we serve, is able to perform this great petition, by Jesus Christ. To whose grace the peace of thy soul is faithfully and feelingly commended, by



*That poor and unworthy servant
of Christ and his Church,*

John Goodwin.



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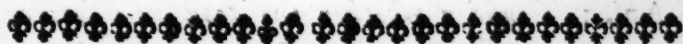
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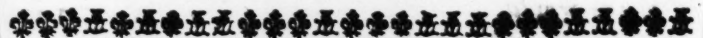
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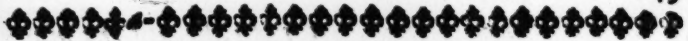
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*There are two other excellent Treatises, writ by
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Luke 11. 9. Col. 1. 10. Luke 23. 24. Psal. 147. 3.
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They are also to be sold by John Stafford,
The

The Authors Preface upon these
ensuing SERMONS.

THE cause of that little Heavenliness which is in the profession of Christianity, is the want of Meditation. Many can meditate cursorily, but that is not enough: it must be a sticking meditation that must affect the heart. That place in 2 Pet. 2. 8. is marvellous pregnant, it was the means why Lot was so touched with the abominations of Sodom; That righteous man dwelling amongst them, in seeing and hearing their ungodly deeds, vexed his righteous soul from day to day. Many heard and saw too besides Lot, and were not vexed. Why? Other matters stuck in their thoughts, they ne'r thoroughly meditated on it; but he vexed himself, that is, the meditation of those evils, and bringing them home to his Soul, vexed him. The word is a fit word, imply-

The Authors Preface.

implying two things : First, the *searching and examining* of a thing, his meditating heart examined their sins, how many they were, how grievous, how damnable, how likely to pull down some vengeance or other upon them. Secondly, the *wracking or vexing upon tryal*; so it was with Lot, he observed all their evils, & weigh'd them in his soul, and then he wrack'd his spirit with the consideration of them. The Evangelist useth this very word for *tossing*; this word that is here put for *vexing*, he puts for *tossing a ship on the seas*, Mat. 14. 24. *The ship was tossed with the waves* : so meditation did toss his Soul with vexation, sometimes down to the deep; O miserable wretches that we are! or, How brutish, how beastly, and how hellish are our sins? Sometimes up; O that the Lord would humble us and spare us! Sometimes over head and ears

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ears in the storm; O fool that I was to chuse my dwelling amongst such men: These meditations vexed his soul: Many have studied meditations, and yet are not acquainted with this *cordiall* meditation: many Ministers that study Divinity all the day, that study the Word all the week, that study their Sermons all the year, may yet for all this, be *carnall* Ministers. why? Because their meditation is but *inventing* and *mentall* meditation; this meditation is a *practick* meditation, the thing meditated feeds the heart: that meditation is like a fluttering Pheasant that flutters before their eyes: it feeds their eyes indeed, but never feeds the stomack, as long as they neither catch or eat it. The saving mysteries of God flutter before their eyes, and before their understandings, they feed their eyes with knowledge, but never feed their souls unto everlasting life, unlesse they fowl for it,

The Authors Preface.

dressè and digest it in their hearts. There is an apt word, *Gen. 24.63.* Isaac went out to meditate in the field: the originall hath it, to signifie *mutuall conference*, his mind conferred with the truth and the truth with him, a mutuall working he wrought upon the truth, by meditating of it, and it wrought upon him by leaving an impression upon his soul: this is a *rare practice* in the world, and yet as *necessary* as most, it is the art of the soul in being heavenly, it is the inuring of thee to every good duty; for by meditation a man comes to have his mind and heart fixed upon every thing that he would, would he pray? he that hath inured his heart to meditate, his mind is fixed in his prayer. Would he receive the Sacrament? He that hath inured his heart by meditation, his mind is fixed in the Ordinance. *David* that was excellent at meditation, had a fixed heart, *Pf. 57. 7. Pf. 112. 17.*





A SERMON

OF

The use and benefit of Di-
vine Meditation.

HAGGAI I. 5.

*Now therefore saith the Lord of Hosts,
Consider your ways.*

THe Prophet reproveth the peo-
ple because they could find
in their hearts to mind their
own houses, and yet were care-
lesse of the house of the Lord:
the Lord had sent a drought
and a famine, and sundry punishments upon
them

B

them

them for *this* thing, and yet they laid it not to heart; and therefore he sends *Haggai* the Prophet unto them to call them to repentance; and (which is an admirable course, & little thought of in the world) he *begins* with holy meditation and consideration: *Now therefore thus saith the Lord, consider your ways*; that is, both in regard of the *course* of them, your wicked ways; and also in regard of the bitter *fruit* of them, your wretched and unprosperous ways. Here be two things very remarkable according to the Text;

1. The *repetition* and inforcing of it again; for he urgeth it again, *Consider your ways*, in the seventh verse.

2. The *benefit* that came by it; it brought them to repentance; for *they all obeyed the voice of the Lord; and the words of the Prophet*, verſe, 12. So that the *Doctrine* from hence is this, that;

D. Et. 1.

Serious meditation of our sins by the Word, is a special means to make men repent.

Meditation is a *settled* exercise of the mind for a further inquiry of the truth, and so affecting the heart therewith, and therefore there be *four* things in meditation.

The first is an *exercise of the mind*, not barely closing with the truth, and assenting unto it, and seeing it, & there rests, but it looketh on *every* side of the truth: *I thought upon my ways & turned my feet unto thy testimonies*, Psal. 119-59 saith *David*; that is, I looked on my ways on both sides, above and beneath; it's taken from

curious



curious works, which are the same on both sides, so that they which work them, must often turn them on every side; used *Exod. 38. 33.* as being works with *two faces*, as one well observes. so it was with *David*, I turned my ways up side down, and looked every way upon them: thou never meditatest, unlesse thou look on thy ways on both sides with all circumstances. An elegant phrase we have, *Dan. 12. 4. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall abound, and be increased, [Run to and fro]* what is that? It is not the bodily removing of man from one place to another so much, as busie stirring of the mind from one truth to another, so that it leech the whole selvedge and compasse of the truth: thou wilt never get the truth to be meditated of, till thou run to and fro in it, meditate it on this side, and meditate it on that side, look on it in every nook of it. Meditation is like perambulation, when men go the bounds of the Parish, they go in every part of it, and in every skirt of it: so meditation is the perambulation of the soul, when the soul looks how far sin goes, how far the flesh goes, how far the wrath of God against it goes.

Secondly, as it is an exercise, so it is a *settled* exercise, it is not a sudden flash of a mans conceit, but it *dwells* upon a truth. When a man is in a deep meditation upon a thing he neither sees, nor hears, nor attends any thing else; the stream of the heart is settled upon the truth received; *The word of God abides in you, and you have over-*

come the world, 1 John 2. 14. How came these young men to overcome Satan? not by looking into the word, or only thinking of the word; but by letting the word *abide* in them. When a man hath been offered an injury; his heart is always settled upon it, when he eats, his mind runs on the injury; when he walks, and talks, still his mind runs on the injury: so thy heart must go on the truth, 2. Tim. 3. *Continue in things thou hast learned*: that is, take up thy mansion house in them. A wicked man may turn into the word sometimes to think of it; but it is as a man goes into another mans house: there is not his dwelling.

3.

Thirdly; it is to make a *further inquiry*. Meditation doth not only settle upon the truth known; but it also would faine know *more* of those truths, that are subject to it; as a man without may see the out-side of the house, but he cannot see the rooms within, unlesse he come nigh, and draw the latch, and come in to the house, and go into the rooms, and look about them. Meditation pulls the latch of the truth and looks into every closet, and every cupboard, and every angle of it. Here is my sin, here is my uncleannesse, and here is Gods anger, here is the wofull evill that will follow upon it, and here is a remedy against it. Meditation searches into all the lofts and closets of the truth. *The entrance of thy word giveth understanding unto the simple, Ps. 119. 30.* The ingresse (as one expounds it) or going into thy word, gives understanding;

standing; the wicked stand looking upon the truth without the doors, but it is the ingresse, or *going into the truth*, that gives understanding. Indeed the truth is like a neat Palace, (saith *Chrysostome*) the Spirit of God is like the light of the Sunne that shineth into it; the wicked they stand without, like fools peeping in at the windows, and there be many thousands of pearls that are not manifest unto them: the house seems dark to them that stands without. Thou must enter into the word, and into every particu'ar truth in it, and go up stairs, and down stairs, and have an eye into every room. There thou shalt find humility, there contrition, there conversion, there Christ and his Spirit in one cloiet, there all his Jewels in that, and that box; all is manifest within doors.

Fourthly it labours to *affect the heart*; it doth not only labour to know more and more of the truth, but also it labours to bring it home to the heart. *The good woman considers a fie'd and buys it*, Prov. 31. 16. This is (saith *Ambrose*) the good Christian soul, if in civility, then much more in Divinity, he considers the truth & buyes it, he taketh it as his own, and appropriates it unto himself; *Lo this (saith Eliphaz) we have searched out: so it is, hear it, and know it for thy self*, Job 5. 27. When thou canst say of the truth, lo this is it, we have searched it out; I have dived into it, perused it, so it is, even so indeed: *all this is, that thou mayest apply it unto thy self, and know it for thy good.*

4.

Reas. 1

The first Reason is, because meditation must
sters up all weapons, and gathers all forces of ar-
guments for to presse our sins, and lay them heavy
 upon the heart: This usury is Spiritual & good,
 when Meditation, like usurers, who grinde
 and suck the blood of the needy, and are not
 content with their Principall, but will have
 consideration for every pound they lay out;
 yea for every shilling, and that for every week,
 and every month, and every quarter, and every
 year: the poor man could be content to pay
 the principall; but to exact use upon use, this
 kills him; so meditation exacteth upon the soul,
 and holdeth it to use upon use. *You have com-*
mitted evill in a corner, but you shall not carry it
away so. Item it was against the knowledge of
God revealed; Item, against many mercies rece-
ved; Item, against many Judgements thrcatned, a-
gainst many checks of conscience, against many
Vows and Promises; remember that, O my soul, I-
tem for that, and Item for this; Item for every
lust, and every circumstance, thus oft, and in this
place, and at that time, in that manner. So medi-
 tated the prodigall. Look as it is in warrs, were
 there but many scores come against an Army,
 they might be conquered: or many hundreds,
 they might be resisted, but if many thousands
 should come against a small army, it would be in
 danger indeed. Meditation leaveth a whole Ar-
 my of arguments, a whole Army of curses, mis-
 eries, judgments, comandements against the soul,
 how ever one misery or plague will not knock

Luke. 5

17.

it

it down, but the soul may brook it, and goe away with it: but meditation brings a great *Armado* of arguments, and tels the soul, God is against thee, and against thy ways: God is against thee where ever thou art, or what ever thou doest. Then the heart begins to cry out, as *Elisba* his servant did, *Master, what shall we do?* *2 Kings* 6. 15. So many horses against us, so many charets, and so many men against us? *Master* what shall we do? so many sinnes, and so heinous, so many judgements and so heavy, and so many evils, and spirituall maladies! Oh, what shall I do to be saved! that I should commit sinne against a God that hath damned innumerable Angels, millions of Kings, Princes, and Nobles! that I should commit it against this God, so mercifull to me, so gracious, so patient, so good to my soul! that I, wretched rebell, should for a *cup* of drink refuse heaven! for a lust not worth a straw under my foot, cast off Christ, and grace and all! how shall I do? Then the soul stands in a maze.

The second Reason is, because *meditation* having bundled up all Items against the soul, and brought it in all bills of account, *it fastens sin upon the soul*; I mean it makes the soul feel it, so that it must needs be convinced without any evasion. Meditation deals with a man as *Elisba* dealt with the messengers of King *Joram*; the murderer he was comming to do mischief to the Prophet, and the Prophet did shut the door, and held him fast at the door, *2 Kings* 6. 32. and

then he made him know that the evill was from the Lord, before he could stirr: so meditation, when the soul would faine out of doors into its old course again, it shuts the door upon it, and holds it fast: Meditation tels the soul, this evill is from the Lord upon thee, O my soul, if thou stirr in or out upon this or that lust any more, this evill, that course, that vengeance and damnation; if ever thou stir forth, thou lovest thy mercy, thou lovest Christ, thou lovest all possibility of comfort. Stir not out, if thou dost, thou wilt rue it. Sometimes when men hear the Word, they go away touched, they resolve not to commit sinne again as they have done; yet when they are gone, it works not, but the heart recoyls again, and turns to its old passe. The Reason is, because they meditate not upon the Word, they fasten it not upon their consciences.

It is with the Word as it is with a *salve*: if a man that hath never so good a salve, that will heal any thing in four and twenty hours, if a man should do nothing but lay it to the wound, and take it off, lay it on and take it off, it will not heal the wound: and no marvell. Why? he will not let it *lye on*, the best salve will not heal the soare nor eat out the corruption; unlesse if be bound on and let lye: so it is with the *Word*, many a soul hears it; *heart, conscience, affections*, all *tougt*: but when he is gone out of the Church, all is gone, his affections dye, his heart dyes, and his conscience becomes unfruitfull.

full: Why? he is *still removing* of the salve, and will not let it lye on, & therefore the Word over-powers not his corruptions; the Word is like the salve; *conviction of conscience* is like the laying on of the salve; *meditation* the binding of it to the soare.

St. James compares a slight hearer to a man that *looks into a glasse*, who soon *forgets* his visage; but a good hearer doth 2 things: First he *stoops down and looks into it*, to take a perfect view of his estate; Secondly he *continues looking into it*, James 1. 25. he doth not leave the glasse behind him, but he carrieth away the glasse with him: *This man shall be blessed in his deed.*

If the pills be never so bitter, yet let a man *swallow* them speedily, there is no great distaste; but if a man chew a pill, it will make him deadly sick. Thy sinnes are like those pills, they go down very pleasingly, because thou *swallowest* them: thou *swallowest* down thine oaths, lies, ignorance, pride, thou *swallowest* down the threats of the Lord, but if thou wouldst *chew* these bitter pills, and *meditate* and *ruminate*, and chew the cud, drunkenesse would be as bitter as hell; swearing and security, and Sabbath breaking, would be as bitter as wormwood; thou durst not go on in them, they would make thee look sourly upon them for ever: like a man that hath chewed a pill, he can hardly ever see a pill, but his stomack riseth against it. *Behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, Hos 2. 6. I will not be so precise (saith the heart) I will*

go on as I have done, I will go after these and these courses; *I will hedge up thy way with thorns* (saith God,) meditation is Gods instrument, and sets a *thorn* in the way to every sin, to bring the heart back again. Would the heart lash out into luke-warmnesse? Meditation sets a thorn in the way; *God will spue thee out of his mouth*: Would the heart sally forth into any sinne? Meditation sets a thorn in the way, *Cursed art thou if thou dost err from Gods Commandements*. The heart cannot step forth into any lust; but meditation meets it with a thorn, this curse, and that curse, this plague, and that plague. Would the heart reach at mercy in its sinne? Meditation pricks it from it; mercie is vengeance unto thee, so long as thou hankrest after sinne. Would the heart reach after Christ in his sinne? Meditation pushes it back with a thorn: no Christ for thee, but a severe judge, so long as thou itchest after thy vanities.

Use I.

What shall we think of them then, which are loth to *practise* this duty? Most men are loth, though they be willing enough to meditate on their worldly affairs. The Mariner meditates and considers his *course* by his *Compassse*, or else he might soon runne on the quick-sands; a Pilgrim is full of thoughts, what? *am I in my right way*? He never comes to a *doubtfull* turning, but he stands in a study and muses, O which is my right way? The Merchant meditates, and his mind runs on his *Count-book*, or else he is soon *bankrupt*: The voluptuous man his thoughts run

run on his pleasure: the drunkard on his cups, the proud man on his credit. But it is one thing to look to that which is thine, & another thing to look to thy self, *Take heed to your selves* saith the Lord, *Dent 11. 16. Dent 12. 30. Dent. 4. 9. Exod. 34. 12.* as if he should say, think on thy self and of thy poor soul; let thy meditation run on thy poor soul. The heart is untoward unto this duty, and as unwilling as a Bear to be brought to the stake: the Bear would rather be rambling abroad then be baited: so men had rather let their hearts ramble about any thing, then bait them for their sins; yea men scoff at it, saying, shall we allways be poring on our sins? shall we run mad? shall we drive our selves to despair? cannot men keep themselves well while they are we?

The poor man he hath no time for this tedious duty: the rich man, he needs it not; the wicked they dare not; so no man will. *No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?* Jer. 8. 6. no man would meditate and think with himself, what is my case? how stands my condition before God? what evill have I done? in the Ark and in the old Law if there were any beast that *chewed not the cud*, it was a sign of an *unclean* beast: the word implies the bringing up of their meat into their mouths again, and sitting down to chew it again. But now men like unclean beasts, swallow down the food of their souls unchewed, and will not meditate thereof, that it may turn
to

to good nutriment; but like Cormorants, they take it down by whole-sale, and are never the better. So the Word is to them as the Quails to the Israelites, while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against them, and smote them with a very great plague, *Num. 11. 33.* So the Word of God sticks in their teeth, ere they chew it, or meditate upon it, the wrath of God falls upon them, and strikes them with a very great plague of hardnesse of heart, and leannesse of soul. But the truth is: you that will not now see your finnes nor meditate on them, you shall see them, and meditate on nothing but on fear, *Lord when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see and be ashamed, Blay 26. 11.*

Let. 1.

Now the *Lets* of serious meditation are, First, *vain company.* When *Peter* saw the people touched, *Act 2. 37,* he said unto them, *Save your selves from this untoward generation, verse 40.* as if he should say, If you love your selves, God hath touched your hearts, suffer not Satan and these wicked instruments, to steal away these impressions of terror from your Souls. If ever you love your Souls, sort not your selves with this untoward generation. See, as it humbles you, so let meditation follow upon it, so that it may *still* humble you. Ill company brings a man to the gallows (as the proverb is) and ill company will bring a man to hell (say I:) and meditation cannot be admitted to it. *David* would not have

a wicked man to abide in his sight, when he was to meditate: he wisht that there were never a wicked man in the world; much lesse would he keep company with them. *My meditation of him shall be sweet; let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more: Bless thou the Lord, O my soul, Ps. 104. 35.*

Let. 2.

The second Let is, *multitude of worldly businesses.* A dream (saith Solomon) comes through multitude of businesses, Eccles. 5. Multitude of businesses causeth the mind so to run on them, that they do even dream of them in their sleep, as *Lucretius, Seneca, Claudian,* & many others of the heathens have observed. He that over-employs himself, his meditations of heaven are dreaming meditations, his thoughts dreaming thoughts, he can never seriously meditate on the good of his soul. Many ingrosse businesses into their hands never thinking they have enough, they are so greedy after the world, and so carelesse of heaven. So they make their hearts like high way ground: the word sown in their hearts is like seed sown in the high-way, where is such a throughfare, and a broad Carriers road of earthly affairs, that all the word and meditation thereof is trodden down as the grasse in the high-way, which cannot grow, so neither meditation in a busied heart. For a good meditating mind, (*Nemo ad illam pervenit occupatus*, saith *Seneca*.) no man ever came to it surfeitted with employments. *David* although he had abundance of State-affairs, both his hands full, yet he would

not

to be over-charged, but that he might meditate in Gods word: *My hands also* (not all down to businesse only in the world, but also up to thy Law) *will I lift up to thy commandments, which I have loved, and I will meditate on thy statutes.* Ps. 119. 48. Take not too much upon thee, like those grasping worldlings, that wil have a finger in a hundred things: *Martha, Martha, thou art cumbred about many things, but one thing is needfull, and Mary hath chosen the better part,* Luke 10. 41. and what was that one thing? *Mary was sitting and meditating in, and pondring Christs words,* not (as *Theophylact* expounds it) as if we would say, *Martha, Martha, thou art cumbred about many dishes, but one thing is needful, only one dish;* though indeed so it be, yet he here speaks not only of one dish, but of many cares which hinder that one necessary duty of hearing and meditating of the word of God.

3. Thirdly, *ignorance*. A man cannot meditate of a thing he knows not; nor thou of thy sins, if thou be not skilfull in Gods Catalogue of thy sinnes; nor of mercies and promises, if thou beest not versed in them; nor of his Precepts, if thou be not expert in them. The *Psalmist* proveth that he had more knowledge than all his Teachers: Why? because he used to meditate. *I have more understanding then all my Tutors, for thy testimonies are my meditation,* Ps. 119. 99.

4. Fourthly, *aversnesse of the heart*: The heart is like the swine, meditation is like the yoke: the Hogge would faine get into forbidden fields for

to grub them; the yoke that hinders him; but he cannot abide it; every step he takes, he lifts up his foot to strike it off if he could; so the heart would fain break through hedges, and get into forbidden ways, and if thou wouldest meditate, it would every moment lift up its heel to put thee besides it: If it cannot put thee besides it, it will mar it if it can; and therefore David praid to God to settle his heart upon the right, and put his yoke upon him, or it would never be stedfast else upon meditation. *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be ever acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer; Psal. 19. 14.*

This *aversnesse* of the heart consists in three things: First, in the *carelesnesse* of the heart, the heart prizeth not meditation; nor the things of grace that are to be meditated on; it will not be at the cost and charge, nor at the pains for them. *To what end is a price in the hands of a fool, seeing there is no heart to get wisdom? Prov. 17. 16.* The heart will not be brought to Gods price? it would fain have the wares at a cheap rate.

Secondly in *runnings* of it? the heart is like a vagrant rogue, he would rather be hanged than tied to his parish. Thou canst not bring it to prayer, but it will be a gadding on by thoughts: thou canst not bring it to a Sermon, but it will be roving after wandring imaginati-
ons thou canst not bring it to a meditation, but it will be a gossiping forth. When Christ came

not have his hands to bind men with his blessed cords, & bind their hearts to him, *Ps. 2.* they fall a meditating afterwards, but it was meditating & imagining vain things, *verse 1.* & when they saw they were to be tyed up, *Tusb* (say they) *let us break their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us, verse 3.* What, do Ministers call us to such strictnesse, thinking to imprison our hearts in their stocks? away with their bonds, no, we will have none of it.

3.

Thirdly, in the wearisomnesse of the heart: It is as weary of meditation as a Cur is of the whip, and the chain; Oh how it barks and maunders, till it be loose! yea, though it be never so eager upon it at the first; it's jaded presently. When God called the Jews to sanctifie his Name, they thought in their hearts; *O, what a wearinesse is this! and ye have snuffed at it (saith the Lord) ye brought that which was lame, & torn and sick, Malac. 1. 13.* What a wearinesse is it to meditate? saith the heart; it snuffs, it is untoward; it is lumpish; it would faine tear off a piece of the duty, or bring it wanting a leg; or without soundnesse and sincerity; yet some of them (saith *Calvin*) were so humbled, that they thought on the name of the Lord, *Malac. 3. 16.* they thought, and meditated, and forced their hearts to consider throughly.

Use. 2.

This may serve for terror unto all those, who for all this that hath been spoken, dare sit down without it; yea, the world will not beleieve these

these things, nor meditate therein: yea, they blame Gods messengers, that call so sore upon them. *Habakuk* was so served; he preached the mercies of God to the humble, and the judgements of God to the wicked: they ask him why he was so mad? well (says the Prophet) *I will stand upon my watch, and see what the Lord sayes unto me, that I may answer to them that reprove me; Hab. 2. 1.* What did the Lord tell him? *Write the vision, and make it plain upon Tables, that he may run that reads it, vers. 2.* Will they not beleeeve? Will they run? Will they not meditate steadily upon these things? Will they not let their hearts stay and meditate and consider? The vision shall be so plain, that he that runs may read it. If thou wilt not stay, and meditate herein, the Word is so plain to thy condemnation, that if thou didst but think of it with a running thought, thou maist read thine own vengeance, thine own woes, in regard of the multitude of them. He that runnes by a way full of holes and pits, though he stand not meditating where are the pits, yet he may run and see them. The book of God is full, leaves and cover, and all, of woes against thee, *Lam. 2. 10.* It is written without, there thou maist read thy sins written; it is written likewise within, there thou maist read thy plagues.

Secondly, in regard of the greatnesse of them, he that runs along, and loe a great town on fire, though he stay not to meditate on it, what or where it is, yet he may run and read it: so is

the curse of sinners a great curse, *Zeph* 1. 10. he that runs may read it.

Thirdly, in regard of the proximitie and neernesse of them. He that runnes, if a sword come out at his throat, though he do not stop to meditate, what is this at my throat, yet he cannot but see it. *Behold the Judge standeth before the door*, *Jam.* 5. 9. Take heed how thou grudgest, or sinnest in any particular; behold the Judge standeth before the door; behold it and meditate on it with thy heart; if not, he is nigh enough, thou canst not step out of doors unto any sinne, but though thou runnest, thou must needs see the Judge that will Judge thee, Iteming thy sinnes, noting the wayes, observing thy courses, ready to unhasp the door on thee, to hale thee unto hell in thy sinnes. *Whose end is destruction*. Whose? Even those that *mind earthly things*, *Phil.* 3. 19. If thy mind and meditation run more on thy ground, cattell, goods, kitchen, house business, earthly talk, discourses, thoughts, more than of heaven, thy end is destruction. If thy thoughts will not stay here, do but runne, and thou maist read it: *Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, I am come to fulfill them*, *Matth.* 5. 17. Some (saith *Chrysostome*) might think now Christ is come, it is no matter though we be not so strict, Christ is enough. Think not thus (saith Christ) but rather think and meditate that I am come to fulfill it my self, and to see it fulfilled in those I mean to save, so as to make it the rule of their lives. *Themistocles* said,

said, he could not sleep in his bed for continuall thinking and meditating on *Miltiades* his Tryumphs; And how canst thou sleep in thy bed, if thou wouldest but meditate on these places of Scripture? Retire thy self apart, there is no casting up of mans account in a crowd: Let me alone, I am busie; so we use to say, when we would be private.

Thou must do with thy soul as *Ehud* did to *Eglon*, who said, *I have a secret errant to thee, O King*, & so al went out, and he said, *I have a message from God to thee*, and so *stabd* him at his heart, *Judg. 3. 19.* So (for *Ehud* was a type of Christ, saith *Lavator*) I have a secret errant to thee, O my soul: and so let all go forth. I have a message from God to thee, a message of wrath for thy Pride, a message of wrath for thy vain hopes: Thus, saith the Lord; Cursed art thou, O my soul; stab it to the heart with this spirituall Dagger, wound it with the blade and haft & all, till thou have let out the fat and the dirt, the filth and iniquity all out. The Prophet speaking of mens looking on Christ whom they have peirced, this meditating & laying to heart that they have crucified the Lord Iesus, saith that *they shall mourn every one in private, the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the house of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; every family apart, and their wives apart, Zach. 12. 2.*

The second means, if thou wouldest meditate aright, observe the times of privacy.

Means 1

Means 2

1. First, the morning, that is the best time for study: *David* chose the morning for meditation, *Psal.* 5. 1, 3. Let them hear this, (saith *Chrysostome*) that arise betimes in the morning to serve their Hogges and their Dogges, their bellies and their backs, before they serve God in meditation or prayer, unlesse it be the mumbling and roaring a few [*Lord have mercy upon us*] that pray not till after many other businesses, it may be not then neither. *David* prayed and meditated in the morning. In the morning thou wasthest thy face and thy hands, but thy soul hath more need, which thou wasthest not: in the morning but putttest thy cloathes on thy body, but thou putttest not on afresh the new man upon thy soul; in the morning thou shakest off sleepinesse from thine eyes, but thou shakest not off drousinesse from thy soul. Thou lookest into the glasse in the morning, to see if thy face be as it should be; but thy soul is not composedly looking into the glasse of Gods word. In the morning look up in prayer, look up in thanksgiving, look up in meditation.

2. Secondly, the night too; *O Lord, I meditate on thee in the night watches*, *Psal.* 63. not as carnall ones doe, when they cannot sleep, then their mind runs on their Cow and their Calf, their markets and vanities, this neighbour and that neighbour, like *Petronius* his dogge, that was hunting while he lay asleep in his kennell.

3. Thirdly, in the evening; *I prevent the night watches, that I might meditate*, *Psal.* 119. 148. he did

did not as wicked men doe, sleep like a horse in the stable on his litter, with his neck tyed to the manger: they did go to bed with their hearts roped to the world, worldly thoughts, this thought and that thought, and God knows what.

Fourthly, *when the heart is touched* at a Sermon or Sacrament, or observing of any judgement or mercy, or act of Gods providence, it is best striking when the Iron is hot; *David*, when his heart was touched at the reproches of the wicked, then he *meditated*, *Pf. 119. 23.* When the Instrument is in tune, then it is good playing upon it; when a Churl is in a good mood, then it is fittest to deal with him. Oft will thy heart be out of tune, oft churlish, and in all ill mood; if thou lettest the good opportunity goe, thou knowest not when thou shalt have such another. When the fish is nibbling at the bait, then it is good twitching at the angle-rod, when the heart is a nibbling at grace, then give a pluck at it by meditation. See *Acts. 17. 11.* now while the tide lasts, see thou maist get into the haven.

Thirdly, *rub up thy self and thy memory*; call as much to mind as thou canst, what evill thou hast done ever since thou wast born, what in the womb, what in the cradle, childhood, youth, age; what a servant, what a Master, what as a servant, what as a sonne, what as a neighbour, what as an inferiour, what as a superiour; either in thought, or word, or deed; how often thou hast omitted good duties, or done them by halves; Item for this, and Item for that. They

Means 3

shall remember themselves and turn unto the Lord, *Psa'. 22. 27.* First they shall remember themselves, and say, what have I done, O wretch! how carelessly have I lived! Secondly, so meditating, they shall turn unto the Lord. Many say, Oh! they cannot remember their sinnes. They lye in a thousand particulars; for they can remember to commit them well enough. See *Lam. 3. 19, 20, 21.* our Greek translation turns it, *I spake to my self, and meditated:* as if they should say, O what a rebell have I been! how unthankfull, how unprofitable under all the means of grace! I may thank my sins for all the plagues of the Almighty that are upon me: if he had damned me, I had been well served. What follows? *The heart bowed, and was humbled,* as it is in the text.

Means 4

The fourth means. Rouze up thy heart. As it is with the eye of the body, so it is with the eye of the Soul: when a man would look wisely upon a thing, as if he would look throu it, he sets his eye on it, as *Paul* set his eyes on *Elymas*, *Ah thou child of the Devil, thou, &c. Acts 13. 9.* Meditation is the setting of the eye of the soul upon a thing: set thine eye upon thy self, and say *Ah thou child of the wicked, why hath Satan filled thy heart! O wretched heart! whence hadst thou thy self-love? hadst thou not it from the Devil? God might do wel to send thee to the Devill, if thou lovest so to be his Broker. Set thine eyes stedfastly upon thine own wayes and thou shalt see infinite hellish evils in thy sins.*

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The third Use is for *Reprehension*. What is more usuall than this, that men make *slight* account of their sins? Nay, when God tels them in their hearts, Thou shalt not do this, thou shalt not doe that, yet they meditate and think, Why may I not? *Samuel* bid *Saul* stay for directions from him, before he sacrificed unto God. It seemes that God spoke to his heart, Stay till *Samuel* comes to direct thee; yet *Saul* forced himself to disobey, and to do Sacrifice, 1. Sam. 13. 12. he was bold, as *Vatable* turns it; he confirmed himself, as *Pagnin* translates it; he thrust himself upon the doing of it; God forbad him, he would doe it: God urged him in his conscience not to do it, yet he would do it: God again whispered to him not to do it, yet he forced himself to do it; as if he should say, I hope I may do it, I have stayed seven days wanting an hour, or a piece of an hour; and a little piece breaks no square: No? God rejected *Saul* for that venture; God would have forced him by meditation, O no, do it not, by no means: he made him think, Oh, it is against Gods commandements, I may not do it. No, but nevertheless he forced himself to doe it. Thus God deals with thousands & millions in the world: Be not a drunkard; Gods flings the meditation into the conscience, yet a drunkard thou wilt be. Be not a drunkard again; a drunkard notwithstanding thou wilt be: Be not again; they force themselves, they will go to the Ale-house. And so of all other sins. If men will cast off this work

Use. 3.

of meditation darted into their souls, they cast off their own mercy. God tels them, pray not, hear not, offer not, without directions from me; they dread not the commandement, they will: I trust prayers are good, I will say them. Thus they will not meditate, or if they do, they break it off before it comes to any strength or perfection: yea, Gods own servants, that desire to look towards *Sion*, is not this your complaint oft? I cannot find sinne heavy: I confesse the word discovers it to me, but I cannot be troubled for it. Look as it is with men in the world, if five hundred pounds weight be laid upon the ground, if a man never pluck at it, he shall never feel the weight of it. Your sinnes are not many hundreds, but many thousands, yea many ten thousands: self-love, security, hardnesse of heart, base fears, &c. it is impossible to reckon them. The least vain thought that ever you imagined, the least vain word that ever you uttered, were weight enough to presse your souls down to hell; Therefore what are so many sins, and so great, and so often committed? What are they? they are as heavy as rocks and mountains; yet ye feel them not so heavy, Why? Ye weigh them not; if ye did, yee should find them heavier than the sand, as *David* did when his sinne was ever before him (*Psal.* 91. 3.) that is, his sinne was ever in his thoughts, and in his meditation, his sinne was ever like a huge Millstone before him, and he was ever tugging and pulling to remove it out of his way.

I, but you will say, How shall I come to feel my burden? Object.

I answer, three things are here to be discovered:

First, the ground upon which our meditation must be raised. Answer.

Secondly, the manner how to follow it home to the heart.

Thirdly, how to put life and power into it.

The ground I deferre to these four heads:

First meditate on the goodnesse, patience, and mercy of God, that hath been abused by any of your sins: the greater they have been to you, the greater is every sinne: this maketh them out of measure sinfull, because God is out of measure mercifull. There are many sinnes in one, when a man sinnes against many mercies. See *Iudg.* 2. 2, 3. *Why have ye done thus?* have done thus and thus *mercifully* unto you? I, why have ye done thus *unthankfully* to me? Why was my mercy abused? Why was my goodnesse sleighted? Why was my patience despised? as if the Lord should say, I speak to your own conscience, think of it, meditate of it, why have ye done this? Doe yee thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy Father? Meditate of it first, and tell me then. For it is a question put to thy meditation to answer. Doe ye thus requite the Lord, ye foolish people? Wert thou ever in want, but God supplied thee? Wert thou ever in weaknesse, but God strengthened thee? Wert thou ever in straits, but God delivered

delivered thee? When thou wert in sickness who cured thee? when thou wert in poverty, who relieved thee? when thou wert in misery, who succoured thee? Hath not God been a gracious God to thee? Every soul can tell, never poor sinner hath had a more gracious God, than I poor sinner have found to my soul. All my bones can say, Lord, who hath been like unto thee? This heart hath been heavy, and thou hast cheered it: this soul hath been distressed, & thou hast eased it: many troubles have befallen me, and thou hast given me a gracious issue. *This poor man* (saith David, pointing to himself,) *this poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him, Ps. 34. 9.* And shall I thus reward the Lord? shall I sinne against his goodnesse? Then what shall I say? Hear, O heavens, and hearken, O earth; Sugne, stand thou still, and thou Moon be amazed at this, & be avenged on such a heart as this. *The Oxe knows his Owner, and the Ass his Masters Crib;* but here is a heart that will not remember to know the Lord. Hear, O heavens, this villany cryeth so loud, that your ears may hear it. Hear all ye Angels and be astonished, hear is villany to make your ears glow: yea, hear hell, hear Devils, if ever there were worse committed by you. When men are but *ingenuous*, if they have received any kindnesse from a friend, they were never in want but he releived them: never harbourlesse, but he housed them; never to seek, but he found them: Let a man deal thus kindly with a man, if this man should deny

deny him any ordinary favour, he will be ashamed of himself, ashamed to come into his presence. What will he think, his house was mine, his cupboard was mine, and his purse was mine, and his friends were mine, and that I should deal thus unkindly with him, even *nature* rebukes me. This serious meditation will help to break thy heart.

The second ground of meditation is to *meditate on the justice of God*: God is a just God as well as mercifull. Speak all ye Devils in hell, Do ye not feel that he is a just God? Speak *Sodome*, Speak *Gomorrhah*, your fire and brimstone can testifie that he is a just God: Speak *Adah*, *Zillah*, and all ye that were drowned in the old world, your deluge can testifie he is a just God, *His judgments are all in the world*, 1. *Chron.* 16. 14. What is become of drunken *Nabal*, and swearing *Saul*, and covetous *Ahab*, and proud *Jesabel*, and mocking *Iehu*, and envious *Shimei*? What is become of all blind *Jebusites*, and parting, cavilling *Diotrephes*? Justice hath taken hold on them. What is poverty? What is nakednesse? What is famine, sicknesse, the gout, the stone, Feaver, plague? These are the little arrows of God justice. What is shame, disgrace, crosses, afflictions, unseasonable rains, dangerous weather, warrs, rumours of warrs? What are all the evils under the Sun? They are the little finger of Gods justice. Thou spiest them here and there, in every Town, and in every Parish, in every Country: doe they not all wit-
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nesse that he is a just God? Read *Psam* 7. 11, 12, 13. *God hath bent his bow already* (saith David) the arrow is ready to flye out of the string: It will not be long before it hit thee, if thou meditate not upon amendment: *God is angry with the wicked every day*, as an angry man useth to say, I will be revenged on thee. Wilt thou not give over thy sinus? I will be revenged on thee. Read *Psal.* 11. 5, 6, 7. Meditate on this; he will neither spare King nor subject, nor rich, nor poor, nor noble, nor base, nor Judges, nor Justices: yet judges and justices may spare, but God will not spare: they may be bribed to pardon, but God will not be see'd to spare them that go on in their wickednesse; and do I think to escape? Nay, my soul, thou canst never escape, except thou obeyest.

3.

The third ground is, *Meditate on the wrath of God*; O! what wrath is it? Can I stand against it? *It burns like an oven, and all the proud, and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble, and the day of wrath shall burn them up.* Behold this, saith the Text, *Malac: 4. 1.* Behold it, and meditate on it. Can I goe naked in a hot fiery Oven? Can I lift up my hands against it? My hands will be scorched. Can I kick against it? My legs will be baked. Can I blow upon it with my mouth? my mouth is fiered. Did I ever see Lime burned? were I in the limes rome, could I endure that boyling? and yet if I live in my sinnes, I shall be as the burning of lime, *Isay 33. 12.* Let thy heart meditate terror: *Who among us shall be able*

able to dwell (that is the meaning of it, as *Monsieur* sheweth) who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall burn with everlasting burning? verse 14. Gods mercie shall say, Take him wrath: I would have converted him, but he would not. Gods goodnesse shall say, Take him wrath: I would have been kind unto him, but he hath abused me. Gods patience shall say, Take him wrath: I have suffered him a great while, that he might have time of repentance, but he repented not in that time. God smote Egypt in their first born: Why? For his mercy endureth for ever. God overthrew Pharaoh and his host: Why? For his mercy endureth for ever. Psal. 136. 15. He smote great Kings, Sihon a King, and Og a King: for his mercy endureth for ever. So will God damn thee that art a drunkard: Why? for his mercy endureth for ever. God will confound thee that art a worldling: Why? for his mercy endureth for ever. God will be revenged on thee that art a Luke-warming: Why? for his mercy endureth for ever. This may well make thee tear the hair off thy head, rather than let thee go on in thy finnes. See *Jerem.* 7. 29. Meditate on this.

The fourth ground: meditate on the constancie of God. As the Lord was an enemy to wicked men, so he continues the same God still, a constant enemy to them still. As the Lord would not endure sinne heretofore, so he is constant, he still will not endure it. Did the Lord once say, Weep and howl ye drunkards? *Ioel* 1.

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5. he is constant, so he saith still. Did the Lord say, *he would burn up Sabbath-breakers*? Jer. 17. 27. he is constant; so he saith still. *Who ever hardened his against the Lord, and prospered*? Job 9. 14. as if he should say, I put it to thee to meditate of it: canst thou shew me a president? did ever any man harden his heart against Gods Word, in his sinne, that prospered? Did *Senacherib* prosper in his will-worship? Did *Judas* prosper in his covetousnesse? Did *Jeconiah* prosper in his stubbornnesse? Where is the Scribe? Where is the receiver? Where is he that counted the towers? *Your fathers, where are they*, saith *Zachary*? Did not my words take hold of them? and are they not all now in hell, that have ever lived and died in their sin, from the beginning of the world? Thou canst not shew me one drunkard, or one mocker, or one prophane person, or one formall professor, from the day that man was created upon the earth, that is not now in hell, if he be dead: Meditate on this, how canst thou expect to be the one onely in all the world that shall escape, if thou livest and dyest in thy sins? If hell were opened, and the botomlesse pit were lookt into, thou shouldest see every soul that ever lived, and died in their sins, even every soul; there is not one soul missing. Meditate on this; when I dye, do I think I shall not be there? nay, I shall be there too, unlesse aforehand I enter into the *strait gate*, and walk in the narrow way of newnesse of life.



The Second
SERMON
 OF
 The use and benefit of Di-
 vine Meditation.

HAGGAI 1. 5.

*Now therefore thus saith the Lord of
 Hosts, Consider your ways.*



Now follows the manner, how to
follow Meditation home to the
 heart. Here are *four* things to
 be practised.

First, *weigh and ponder all
 these things in thy heart.* It's said
 of Mary, she *pondered*, Luke 2. 19. and kept
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all these sayings in her heart: verse 51. The words signifie two things. First, she compared these things together. Secondly, she cast them in the scales together. Dost thou know God is mercifull? ponder it with his justice. Dost thou know that Jesus Christ dyed for sinners? ponder it with the true drift of it, how that it is not to let men go on in their sins, but to save them from their sinnes. Dost thou obey God in this or that Commandement? O ponder thy life with the rest, *Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.* Prov. 4. 26. A man that eats his meat well, Forty morsels well, yet one crum going awry throttles him. Thou walkest in these and these Commandements; yea, but there be other Commandments besides these? dost thou walk in them too? thou must, if thou meanest to have thy ways to be established. The Jews had their *continers*, *talents*, *miras*, *seles*, which were greater weights; so they had also their *gerabs*, and *agorabs*, smaller measures, and smallest of all: so have thou greater and lesse weights; great ones to ponder the great Commandements, and lesse to weigh even the least of Gods Commandements: and see thou make true *Evangelicall* weight, or else all will not be well. Suppose a man were to pay a 100 pound of good and lawfull money, and in weight, upon forfeiture of all that he hath; if he weigh it not, but the Creditor doth, and finds it light, he is undone. If thou ponderest not thy ways, God will ponder them: Prov. 5. 21.

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the word signifies, he weighs, and ponders them in a ballance, or scales; he puts the word of his Gospel in the one, and thy goings and obedience in the other. *Then art weighed, and art found too light, thy kingdom is departed from thee, saith God to Belshazzar, Dan. 5. 27.* So if thou be light, thou shalt be weighed, and so found, thou shalt lose the Kingdom of heaven for ever.

Secondly, strip sin, and look upon it stark naked: sin covers and disguiseth it self, with pleasure, profit, ease, and many a whorish garment, and so inticeth the heart. Even a toad, if she were covered over with gold, those that saw only the gold would pocket it up; if it were naked they would fling it in the kennell. Why doe men love covetousness? Why, its hooded with profit. Why carding, dicing, hunting, hawking, tabring, piping, and more than the word alloweth? Why? they are cloathed with pleasure, and delight. Its the duty of Ministers to unmask and uncase sin, and pluck off the vail that covers it from appearing unto men. The not doing of this is the cause, that men do not meditate on the vilenesse of their sin, never are humbled, never escape Gods wrath; even because they not *discover mens iniquities*, *Lam. 2. 14.* Alas, the profit of thy sins shall cease, the pleasure cease, the ease cease, and all these goodly suits shall vanish away, when the soul comes to dye, or to stand before the judgement seat of Christ: sin will remain, but thy silver, and thy gold, where will that be then? thy laughter, and

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thy merriment, what will become of that then? thy delight will be *gone*. Meditate therefore with thy self, my sin is now gainfull, and easie, and pleasant; but what will my sin become, when I come to lye on my death-bed? what good will it do me, when I have most need of succour? I will never acknowledge *him* my friend that will turn against me, when I have most need of him. Alas, I must dye, I must come to judgement, I must go either to heaven, or to hell: the profit that I get now by my sins, will it bestead me *then*? the pleasure, the ease that I now find in sin, will it help me *there*? Alas no, it will then be my break-neck, it will be a Devill unto me: the more I have been delighted with it, the more it will gall me: the more I have gotten by it, the more it will damne me: the sin which I most of all loved, will most of all torment me. *Ecclesiast. 11. 9.* look thus upon sin.

The third means: *dive into thy own soul and heart*. There is a rough *brawn* over thy heart, that it feels not its sins: Now Meditation must look through, and come to the heart at the *quick*, and cause the truth to dive into the deep places of the soul. When the timber is hard, the workman cannot thrust in the nail with the weight of his hand: no, he must *hammer* it in. Meditation is the hammering of the heart. It's a pertinent phrase, *Ier. 23. 24.* *Is not my word like a fire* (saith the Lord) *and like a hammer that breaketh the rocks in pieces*? There be two similitudes, first, of a *hammer*: the Word of God is the

the hammer; meditation is the hand that taketh this hammer, and knocks the nail into the rocky heart, and makes it enter: Wilt thou not feel? I'll make thee feel (saith Meditation) wilt thou not take notice of thy wretched estate? Meditation comes with blow after blow, and makes it take notice. Secondly, of fire; the word is like fire; Meditation kindles it about the heart. A man benumbed with cold is senselesse; the water frozen with cold, though the least pebble would have sunk in it before, now a great milstone is able to lye upon it, and not sink; the water is able to bear it: so is the heart, be it's sins never so heavy, as the hill of *Basan*; yet it bears it and feels no weight: but Meditation thawes the heart, and then every sin pincheth and oppresseth. *Is not my word like fire?* as if he should say, think of it, and muse of it, and meditate of it, and thou shalt feel it as a fire. Meditation is the often smiting of the heart with this hammer: so did *Ephraim smite upon his thigh*, Jer. 31. 19. like a man in a miserable agony, he thumps his own breast, and in a vexation strikes his hand on his thigh. Oh miserable wretch that I am! So did *Ephraim*, Oh what an unruly Ox am I! how unwilling am I to bear the yoke of the Lord? Oh and oh the hardnesse of my heart! oh that I could tell how to beat thee black and blue! Many men smite their hearts, but they smite them not often enough. When *Elisha* bad *Joash* smite upon the ground, he smote thrice, and stayed. The man of God said to him in anger, *Thou*

shouldst have smitten five or six times, for then thou hadst smitten Syria, till thou hadst consumed them, whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.

2 Kin. 13. 19. So men smite their hearts twice, or thrice, or so; but they will not smite their sins dead: it may be they break the head of their sins, but they recover again, and grow strong upon them, as at first. Thou must smite five or six times, yea fifty times five times, till thou hast quite broken the impostume of thy heart. Meditate on the *mercies* of God, and with them smite it often, and often: Meditate on the *justice* of God, and with it smite it again, and again: Meditate on the *wrath* of God, which is as a consuming fire, and with it smite it soundly. Meditate on the *truth* of the Lord, this threatning and that threatning; this commandement, and that commandement; this promise and that promise; and with all these smite it to powder.

The fourth means, *Anticipate and prevent thine own heart*: meditate what thy heart will one day wish, if it be not humbled, and tell thy Soul as much; thou wilt one day wish, Oh that I had been humbled under the reproofs of the Lord! Oh that I had been wise to have understood my own mercy! Cursed be the day that ever I neglected the means of grace; so the Lord brings in a foolish obstinate sinner, cursing and banning his own soul, sobbing and howling at the last, *O how have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof! and have not observed the voyce of my Teachers, nor inclined mine*

ear to them that instruct me? *Pro. 5. 12, 13.* I had Ministers to preach to me, but I would not come at them. or if I did, I cared not for their doctrine, I had friends that advised me well, but woe is me damned wretch! I heeded them not. Thus thou wilt cast the fool into thine own teeth, and sling a thousand curses into thy own face, because of thy madnesse. I might have learned, but I would not; I might have been humbled, but I would not: *I was almost in an evill in the midst of the assembly of the congregation, verse 14.* I lived where the Saints of God were in whole assemblies, but I mockt them, I hated them, I misliked them for being too precise. I was not ashamed of my security, no not in thy sight. Thus thou wilt cry out one day, if now thou wilt not yeeld unto meditation, which must make this as present with thee. Know thou, O my soul, the time of thy *visitation* is at hand, thou wilt curse thy self hereafter, if thou dost not now be moved by Gods mercies, thou shalt never see mercy more: Now be awaked by Gods judgments, or else thou shalt feel them for evermore; now or for ever thou shalt roar for them. Then thou shalt curse thy gains and thy profits that bewitched thee, thou shalt curse thy pleasures and delights that besotted thee, curse thine own heart, and thine own soul, and thine own conscience that have damned thee. Meditation may tel thee, thus it will be with thee, unlesse thou obeyest now. *Hear ye me now, Oh ye Children and depart not from the words of my mouth, verse 7.* hear

the word now, and obey it, let it not depart out of thy meditation. Now be humbled with grace, or then, thou shalt be humbled with horror: then, thou shalt wish, Oh that I had been ruled! When thou art in hell, then, thou shalt meditate, Oh it was good counsel that such and such a Minister gave me; good counsel that such a friend, and such a brother gave me; but wretch that I was, I had not grace to follow it. I had more mind of my pleasures, more mind of my vanities than of grace. Oh if it were to do again, I would not do so for a thousand worlds: but alas, it is now too late. Therefore let Meditation presse this upon thee before-hand.

Now follows the third thing, how to put life to Meditation. Four duties are to be done to this purpose.

1. Let Meditation haunt the heart, let meditation dog thee with the bellish looks of thy sins, and follow it with the dreadfull vengeance of God, haunt it with promises, haunt it with threatnings, haunt it with mercies, and haunt it with judgements, and haunt it with Commandments. The heart is like the Beaver, when it perceiveth it cannot possibly escape from the Huntsman, it cuts off the Member for which it is hunted, and flings it down, and so escapes (saith *Æsop*) So pursue thy heart with its sins, with the hue and cry of Gods mercies; pursue it with the hubbub of Gods judgements; let meditation haunt it, and let thy soul see it shall never be rid of the haunt; at last it will be content to part with

with its lusts. Let Meditation say, Wilt thou forsake thine own mercies? If thou livest thus and thus, If thou prayest thus and thus, dead-heartedly, thou kickest against thine own mercy, wilt thou rush upon the pricks? This mercy thou mayst have, if thou wouldest amend, that vengeance thou shalt have, if thou do not amend: Either cut off thy sins, or else God will cut off thy Soul. *Return, O Shulamite, return, return,* its the voice of Christ to thee; Let Meditation say, *Return, O my Soul, return, return,* & thou mayst be saved; return, or else thou shalt be condemned. Now what was the effect of this haunting meditation? *Or ere I was aware my soul made me like the Chariots of Aminadab,* vers. 12. That is, my soul musing and meditating on these and these commandments, it so humbled my soul, that it made me yeeld; yea, and made me run as fast as the Chariots of *Aminadab*, freely and willingly to Christ.

Deal with thy heart as *Iunius* his father dealt with him: he seeing his Son was *Atheistical*, he laid a Bible in every room, that his son could look in no room, but behold a Bible haunted him, upbraiding him, Wilt thou not read me, Atheist? Wilt thou not read me? And so at last he read it, and was converted from his Atheisme: So let meditation haunt thy heart, hold forth the comandements, promises, threatnings of the Lord, that thy heart may see them; let meditation haunt thee in thy luke-warmnesse: prayest thou thus luke-warm? This prayer will break

thy neck one day. Repentest thou? This luke-warm repentance will cause God to spue thee out of his mouth. Hearst thou, speakest thou, thinkest thou? These luke-warm duties will confound thee ere long, if thou lookest not to it.

Let Meditations haunt thee, as they haunted *Nehemiah* with warnings, *ten times* (saith the Text) they sent to *Nehemiah*, *they will be upon thee*, *Nehem. 4. 12.* Beware of the danger, the enemy will be upon thee: ten times they warned him, never giving over till *Nehemiah* looked about him, *verse 13.* So do thou haunt thine own heart: they will be upon thee, this curse, this wrath, that hardnesse of heart, this security will be upon thee. Ten times, yea, a thousand times ten times, never give over thine own soul, untill thou hast made it to submit. Indeed there be some, let God send Meditations to haunt them, and follow them, saying, Repent leave this or that sin? why wilt thou be damn'd with this sin? Oh forsake it, presently they will gagg the mouth of meditation, and of conscience, and strike them stark dead: as *Abner* when *Azabel*, would haunt him and follow him, and turn neither to the right hand, nor to the left, but follow him at the heels. *Turn aside* (saith *Abner*) but he would not turn aside from following him. *Turn aside from me* (says *Abner* again) or I will kill thee, but he would not turn aside, he would follow him close: Then he up with his Spear and slew him 2. *Sam. 2. 19. 20, 21, 22, 23.*

So many deal with the Meditation of conscience, when conscience would dogg them, and weary them out of their sins, they will not, when conscience would haunt them, they will not be haunted therewith; when conscience would follow them up with their desperate wilfulnesse they gall and wound, and murder conscience to be quiet. But *David* haunted his heart, and would have it haunted.

The second duty: *Let Meditation trace thy heart*, as it should haunt thee, so also let it trace thee in the same steps. So would the Church, *Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord*: Lam, 3. 40. The word (in the originall, says *Buxtorf*) signifies, *track her steps, step by step*: this step was in the ditch, that in the mire, that step awry: track them all, that we may undergo them all again, and turn unto the Lord. Never pray but let Meditation track thy prayer: this passage was right, that passage was amisse. Never keep a Sabbath but let Meditation track thy keeping of it; this duty was sincere, that was rotten: Never do any thing but let Meditation track it. This thought, this word, this action was warrantable; that was out of the way: track thy heart, as the Lord tracked *Eliab*, he tract him in the wilderness, he tract him under the juniper tree, he tract him in the cave; *What dost thou here Eliab? go forth*: 1. King. 19. *What dost thou here Eliab, go, return*. He tract him in the Mount, *Go, return, what dost thou here Eliab?* this is not a place for thee. So let Meditation wait thee; what dost

2.

dost thou here, O sinner? what dost thou here, drunkard? in thy Cupps, or in thy prophane-
ness, what dost thou here? this is not a place
for thee, unlesse thou mean to perish. It may
be thou art now scar'd out of these sins, and art
run into *civil honesty*; let Meditation still track
thee. What dost thou do here, O sinner? Civi-
dicie is not a case fit for thee, unlesse thou wert
better, thou shalt be torn in pieces. It may be
thou art driven out of thy civillity; and art gone
further, to the profession of Religion, though it
be without the power of it; let meditation still
wait thee. What dost thou here, O sinner? this
sorry kind of profession is not a race fit for
thee: unlesse thou be godlier than so, thou shalt
be devoured with everlasting fire.

Meditation is like the coursing of a Hare in
the snow; the Hare fearing to be taken by the
dogs, Here she stops, there she leaps, here she
interleaps, there she goes backward, and for-
ward, upward and downward, and all to de-
ceive the dogs, that they may not find her; but
they goe smelling, winding and turning, and
track her step by step, till they find her: so me-
ditation in the coursing of the Soul, the heart
hath a thousand fetches, a thousand Meanders
and labyrinths, a thousand crosse windings, and
compassings; & deceits, and all to puzzle Medita-
tion. But Meditation must trak the heart, as God
dealt with *Iob*, he counted his steps, step by step,
Iob 14. 16. Meditation is the souls bloud-bound,
it will never leave howling, the wrath of God,
til

till he hath taken the hearts sin for a prey; Meditation haunts it out of one sin, and it runs into another; Meditation haunts it out of that, and it runs into a third: Meditation is a good pur-sevant, it prosecutes the sinner, and attaches him.

Now because the heart is most cunning, and hardest to be trackt by its sent, when the heart hath taken up abundance of good duties, and attained unto sundry graces, these good duties and common graces drown the sent of the hearts wickednesse. As Huntsmen observe, that the hounds cannot well hunt in the Spring, as *Theophrastus*, and *Pollux*, and others obierve; the sweet odors of the flowers and herbs (says *Opian*) hinder the hounds from smelling the hare: so it is with Meditation; it is hard for it to track the heart in the green Spring time of *civill* honesty and formality. And therefore let Meditation make diligent search, saith he.

The third duty: *hale thy heart before God*, and let Meditation bring it before his throne, & there powre out thy complaint against it before God, out with all thy villany there, and article against thy self, and bring as many complaints, against thy self before heaven, as there be dops in a bucket full of mater. So doe the godly: *I powred out all my complaints before him* (Psal. 102. in the preface) I powred out my complaints, as a man powreth out water out of a vessel; generally men are willing to call for mercy, but they are not so willing to *bring complaints* unto God against themselves: ye shall have

have them *whisper* after the Ministers, as he is begging for pardon and mercy, but they will not do so, whiles he is complaining of their sins the hellish and devillish abominations of their heart. These are men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith, and shall never have mercy, till they be as forward to complain of their sins, as to be plaintiffs for mercy.

When a man in Meditation meets with a hard matter, that he cannot sufficiently dive into, he breaks it to another: so do thou to God; break all thy heart to God, tell him of thy hardnesse of heart, of the pride of thy heart, of the desperate prophanenesse of thy heart: but take these rules with thee.

First, thy complaint must be full of sorrow: Psal. 55.

2. Secondly, it must be a full complaint, of all thy sins, and of all thy lusts; Lam. 2. 18, 19. *Pour out thy heart like water before the face of the Lord.* Water runs all out of a vessel when you turn the mouth downward; never a spoonfull will stay behind. The wicked will not complain of their sins fully: they make hypocritical professions. If it be a sin, I am sorry for it; (sayes one) if it be naught, I cry God mercy; (saith another) when their own consciences tell them it is a sin, yet they will not complain of it absolutely.

3. Thirdly, thy complaint must be with *aggravation*: thou must aggravate thy sins by all the *circumstances*, that may shew it to be odious, as Peter did: *When he thought thereon, he wept,*
Mark

Mark 14. 72. the Original hath it, *he cast all these things one upon another.* Wretch that I was, Christ was my master, and yet I denyed him; such a good master, that he called me before any of my fellow Apostles, and yet I denyed him; I was ready to sink once, he denyed not me: I was to be damned once, he denyed not my soul, and yet I denyed him; he told me of this sin before-hand, that I might take heed of it, and yet I denyed him. I said I will not commit it, nor forsake him, and yet I denyed him: yea, this very night, no longer ago, did I say and say again, I would not deny him, and yet I denyed him; yea, I said, though all others denyed him, yet would not I; and yet worse than all others, I denyed him with a witness before a maid, before a damsel; nay, more filthy beast that I am, I said I did not know the man; nay more, I sware I did not know him; nay more than all this, I did even curse my self with an oath, that I did not know him: nay more, all this evil did I, not above five or six strides from my Lord and Saviour: nay more, even then, when if ever I should have stood for him, I should have done it then, when all the world did forsake him. O wretch that I was, I denyed him! he cast up all these circumstances together, and meditating on them, *he went out, and wept bitterly.*

Fourthly, thy complaint must be a *self-condemning complaint*: thou must condemn thy self, and lay thy self at Hell gates, and set the naked point of Gods vengeance at thy throat.

Thus

Thus and thus have I lived, damned, cast-away, as I have deserved to be! So did *Ezra* in the behalf of the Jews, *Ezra* 9.

For 1. He *fell on his face*; he did not bow down on his knees; but like a man astonished, he fell on his knees, ready to fall on the ground in amazement.

2. He *spread out his hand unto the Lord*, *verse* 5. as if he should say, here is my heart-blood, Lord here is my breast, Lord, we deserve thou shouldst stab us with thy wrath.

3. He *blushes* to look heaven in the face, *verse* 6. so vexed to think on the sins of his people, that he is even confounded to beg mercy.

4. He is (as it were) *dumb* and *speechlesse* before God: *And now our God, what shall we say after all this; for we have forsaken thy commandments*, *verse* 10. Shall I excuse the matter? alas! it is inexcusable. *What shall we say after all this?* Shall we call for thy patience? We had it, and yet were little the better. Shall we call for mercy, Why? we had it, and yet our stubborn hearts would not come down, I know not what to say for our selves: for we have sinned against thee.

5. He declares Gods truth, that he had *warned them by his Prophets* (*vers.* 11, 12.) but no warning can better us.

6. He *shews how God had punished them*, yet they would not be humbled: for all that God had brought upon them *lesse evils than they deserved*, and wrought *deliverance* for them, which they

they could not have expected; *What shall we say, should we for all this break thy commandments? verse 13, 14.* What can we expect but tell and confusion?

7. He is sensible of Gods Judgements and righteousness: *O Lord thou art righteous*: as if he should say, How canst thou spare us for this sin? How can it stand with thy righteousness? How is it that such hell-hounds as we are, should live above ground, when thou art so righteous God? It is a wonder that the earth opens not her mouth for to swallow us up quick: for, *O Lord thou art righteous.*

8. He layes down his soul, and all the peoples souls at Gods feet; as if he should say, here we be, thou maist damn us if thou wilt; *Behold we are all here before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee, because of this, verse 15.* Behold here are we: rebels we are: here are our heads, and our throats before thee, if now thou shouldst take us from our knees unto hel, & from our prayers unto damnation, we cannot ask thee why thou dost so: Oh it's mercy, it's mercy indeed, that we have been spared. Thus Meditation must bring our hearts before God, and there complain against them before heaven.

Meditation should deal with the heart, as the Father did with his possessed child, who carried him to Christ, saying, Master my child is possessed with a Devill, even a dumb spirit, and I spake to thy Disciples that they should cast him out, but they

they could not, Mark 9. 18. Bring him to me (saith Christ) vers. 19. How long is this ago: since this came to him? Of a child (saith the Father) & often it hath cast him into the fire, & often into the water to destroy him; but if thou canst do any thing (as certainly thou canst do all things) have compassion on us and help us, vers. 22. And then Christ helped him. So let Meditation drive thy heart to God, saying; Lord here is my heart (I believe) possessed with a Devil; for it is a most abominable sinful heart: I brought my heart to thy Ministers to cure it, to Sermons to Prayers, to all other good duties, but they could not help me. my heart is a devillish heart, still my heart is wicked, and rebellious still, the Devill, Oh, the Devill is in it still! Oh, how he tempts me! he holds me, he casts me into the fire of this lust, and into the water of ever-flowing iniquity. Have thou compassion, come and help me, for my heart is miserably vexed with Satan; when I pray, the Devill stuffs me with dead thoughts, and drowsie desires, the Devill fills me with wandring Imaginations, and I know not what; when I hear the Word, the Devill makes me to rise up against it, or forget it, or not obey it; when the Sabbath is come, the Devill sets me on thinking my own thoughts, and speaking my own words; when a Sacrament is come, the Devill hinders me in self examination, The Devill disappoints me of my preparation: Oh have thou compassion on me.

The fourth duty; let meditation, when it hath held,

held thy heart before God, there cast thee down before him: when Meditation hath searched out thy case, and made it appear how wofull it is, then let it lay thee along before God, with *What shall I do to be saved?* So it did with them in *Acts 2. 27.* as if they should say (saith *Chrysostome*) we have not one jot of hope to find mercy, so long as we live as we do. What shall we do? Say what thou wilt, our eares are ready to hear it; command what thou wilt, our souls, what ever it be, are willing to do it: bid us suffer whatsoever thou pleasest, tell us what it is, and we will endure it. They did not say (notes *Chrysostome*) *How shall we be saved,* as wicked men do they desire to be saved, but their main care is not to see *what* they must do, they are told what they must do, and yet refuse to do it; but thy chief study must be, to cast thy self down before God with the good Jaylor, *Sirs, What shall I do to be saved? Acts 16. 30.* First, *what must I do?* and then *to be saved.* First, thy care must be what to do to get out of thy sinnes, how to be rid of thy lusts, and then to be saved; as if he should say, I see I am at a damned passe, and therefore I was a making away my self, the fire of hell did slay my soul: but now is there hope of salvation? is there indeed? Oh tell me, I am willing to do any thing, what must I do? Keep nothing back of all the will of the Lord; be it punishment to suffer, tell me of it, I am ready to beare it; be it precepts for to do, though never so irksome, O let me know

it, and I would not refuse it. *What must I do to be saved?* When the heart is thus humbled upon sound Meditation, it's willing to do or suffer any thing. *Jonah* is willing to be cast into the sea, being humbled, *Jonah* 1. 2. *Here I am, Lord deal With me as thou wilt.*

Motiv. I

The first Motive. *Is it not a folly to meditate?* Should a man walk on in a course, & not meditate whether it will tend? When he falls into mischief, what will he say? I never thought of this before, I never considered that this would be the end. Now it is the part of a fool to say, *I never thought*, as the Latine proverb hath it, when the Steed is stollen, if he should then shut the Stable door, what wouldest thou say; He should have thought of that before. The rich man in the Gospell had these meditations in his heart; he thought within himself, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? He said in his heart, This will I do, I will pull down my barns and build greater; and will say to my soul, *Soul, soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, eat, drink, and be merry; Luke* 12. 17, 18, 19, 20. *Thou fool* (said God) *this night shall thy soul be required of thee; then, whose shall these things be that thou hast provided?* God said thus unto him; not as if God spake thus familiarly unto him (saith Theophylact) but it is a parable, and God sayes so in his word, *Thou fool this night shall they require thy soul of thee.* In this night of thy blindness, in this night of thy security, shall they require it:

he

he doth not say, I will require thy soul of thee; but *they*: he doth not say who, but *they*, the Devils in hell, God knows who shall come, thou shalt dye, & they shall fetch away thy soul to hell: *they* shall require it. A godly mans soul is not required, but rather he requires God to take away his soul: he is willing to dye, that he may be with Christ: but a wicked mans soul is required of him: he would willingly not dye, but that his soul is required of him, and he must dye. Doubtlesse the rich fool now thought with himself, I never thought that I should have dyed so soon, and therefore now he calls (it may be) to his Lord, Lord, and cryes God mercy. But what will they say to him? Thou shouldest have thought on this before.

The wise man shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools, Prov. 3. 3. The wise and prudent, those that truely meditate of things before hand, shall have glory; but fools that hope to be promoted to glory & salvation, shame and confusion of face shal be all their promotion, & when they come thereto, besides their expectation; what will they say? We never thought it would be thus with us before; but fools as we were, we thought to be promoted to heaven: like *Haman*, when King *Ahasuerus* said unto him, What shall be done to the man whom the King will honour? O thus and thus (saith *Haman*) for he thought, I am the man whom the King intendeth to honor, *Ester*, 6. 6. but when *Haman* was presently after to be han-

ged on a gal'owes, he might rightly say, I never thought of this before. So what will be done to the man whom the Lord will honour? Thus and thus sayest thou, he shall have mercies, blessings, heaven: I, for thou thinkest I am the man that God intendeth thus to honour; but when thou art come to hell, what wilt thou say then? I never thought of this before, that so it would be.

Mot. 2. The second Motive is, *Thou wouldest be loth to have the brand of a Reprobate*: Not to meditate, is that brand; *The wicked through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God; neither is God in all his thoughts, Psal. 10. 4.* He scorns to be so poring upon Bibles, to be so wracking his mind with his sins; *He hath said in his heart, God will not require it, verse 13.* God requires no such scrupulosity nor strictnesse.

Mot. 3. The third Motive is, *Thou wouldest be loth to rob God of his honour*, and the main part of his service, which is meditation. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, Mat. 22. 38.* How can this be true of them (saith *Chrysostome*) who become vain in their imaginations? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul and mind: And so do I (saist thou:) So dost thou? What, and not love God with all that is in thy heart? Thy thoughts are in thy heart, thy meditations are in thy mind; If thy thoughts then, & meditation be not of God, thou dost not love God with all thy heart, *David* did not only pray, that the words

of his mouth, but also that the thoughts of his heart should be ever acceptable to the Lord, *Psal. 19. 14.* not only that he might be full of heavenly communication in his mouth, but also of holy meditation in his heart. Behold (saith he) thou requi-
rest truth in the inward parts, *Psal. 51. 5.* And meditation is one of the duties of truth in the inward parts.

The fourth Motive: *Thou wouldest be loth that all the worship thou givest to God, should be abominable:* so it will be without meditation; meditation before it, meditation after it, Mot. 4.

First, *Thou must meditate before thou goest about a duty of Gods worship:* consider before thou hear the word of God, meditate what thou art going about, *Hearken O daughter, and consider, incline thine ear, Psal. 45. 10.* First, consider and meditate, and then incline thine ear. This is part of those words often in Scripture, *Be ready, be ready:* *Be ready and come up,* saith God, *Exod. 34. 2.* *Be ready against the third day,* *Exod. 29* *Gather your selves together Zep. 2. 1.* that is, prepare to meet thy God, *O Israel, Amos, 4. 12.*

Secondly *meditate after the duty.* When men part with men, they use to give one another a farewell, and not bluntly deliver their mind one to another, and so turn their backs one upon another. *Lysias* could not write a letter to *Felix*, and break up abruptly, but he gave him a farewell *Acts 23. 30.* Neither may a man when a duty is done, go away bluntly from God, but give him a farewell by holy meditation. It's an unseemly

kicking of a duty, as most men do when they are come to the end of their prayers, *to whom with the Father and holy Spirit be ascribed all praise and glory, Amen*; Come is dinner ready? or what news do you hear? This is unmannerlineffe towards the ordinances of God. A man that hath been at a good dinner, will sit a while at it, or walk a while, he will not presently run to his work, that the meat may digest the better: So when thou hast been at Gods dainties, sit after it a while, pawing and meditating thereof, as often as thou well mayest, let it have its working a while.

What is the reason thou hast so many by-thoughts in prayer? Because thou dost not meditate before hand and after. Hence it is, that thine eyes are not directed to the duty, but like a blind Archer thou shootest but by aim; when the good Archer shoots, he must have the *whi.e* in his eye still, which he must levill at. *My voyce shalt thou hear betimes in the morning, in the morning will I direct my prayer to thee, and will look up, Ps. 5. 3.* How came that? you may look on his meditations, *vers. 1.* By meditation he was wont to direct and levell his prayers to God. Wicked men know that God is before them, as a blind man may learn the But is before him, but they see not God *before* them to direct their prayers unto him: they pray at rovers. Thou must use then to meditate of God, that thy prayers may be directed: if thou prayest not thus, thy prayers are like them in the Prophet, who
drew

drew near to God with their lips, but their hearts were far from him, like an arrow beside the But, or far from the mark, either wide or short. They have not cryed unto me with ther hearts, when they howled upon their beds, Hosea 7. 14. They prayed, but they prayed not to me; (saith the Lord) as the white may say of a bungling Archer, he shoots, but not at me when he shor, he shot another way. God counts all such prayers no better than *howling of Dragons and wild beasts*; (so the word signifies saith Scindler) God would as lief, and rather to, that a Dog, or a Wolf, or Dragon should howl in his hearing, than hear such a prayer as this is. The only way therefore to perform duties of Gods worship purely, is chiefly *meditation, meditation, meditation,*

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The first of these is the fact that the
 world is not a uniform whole, but a
 collection of many different parts, each
 with its own life and character. The
 second is that the world is not a static
 thing, but a living, growing organism.
 The third is that the world is not a
 machine, but a complex of many different
 forces, each with its own power and
 influence. The fourth is that the world
 is not a simple thing, but a complex
 of many different parts, each with its
 own life and character. The fifth is
 that the world is not a static thing, but
 a living, growing organism. The sixth
 is that the world is not a machine, but
 a complex of many different forces, each
 with its own power and influence. The
 seventh is that the world is not a simple
 thing, but a complex of many different
 parts, each with its own life and character.
 The eighth is that the world is not a
 static thing, but a living, growing organism.
 The ninth is that the world is not a
 machine, but a complex of many different
 forces, each with its own power and
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 many different parts, each with its own
 life and character.

THE
DANGER

Of deferring
REPENTANCE,

DISCOVERED

In a SERMON preached at
Maidstone in Kent.

By that Reverend and Faithfull Mi-
nister of the VVord,

WILLIAM FENNER, B. D.

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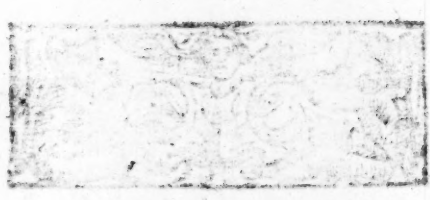
CHURCH

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London, Thursday 1. 1. 18...



A SERMON OF

Mr. WILLIAM FENNERS
at Maidstone,

PROV. I. 28.

*Then shall they call upon me, but I will
not answer: they shall seek me early,
but they shall not find me.*



Here is a good English Proverb amongst us, that *he that neglects the occasion, the occasion will neglect him.* Solomon wisely begins his Proverbs with it: for he bringeth in the wisdom of his Father in these five particulars: First, *making a generall Proclamation in the 20 verse, Wisdom cryeth without, she uttereth her voyce in the streets.* He compareth God unto a Cryer goeth up and down the City from street to street, and from door to door, crying his commodity, even the richest that ever was, which is a Christ,

a Christ for redemption, a Christ for sanctification, a Christ to enlighten those that walk in darkness, and in the shadow of death. *Ha, every one that thirsteth, here is a Christ for you.*

2. Secondly, here is a mercifull reprehension, in the 22. verse, *O ye foolish, how long will ye love foolishnesse, and ye scorers take pleasure in scorning? Foolish indeed to be without Christ: Foolish to be without grace, foolish to chaffer away our souls for sin. How long, ye scorers, will ye take pleasure in scorning? will you still persist in your wickednesse, and never have done with your sins, will you never turn back again, but damn your souls for ever? O ye foolish, how long will you love foolishness?*

3. Thirdly, here is, a gracious exhortation in the 23. verse: *turn you at my correction, lo, I will pour out my mind unto you, and make you to understand my words.* As if he should say, Do you not see how you are going apace to confusion; and that the way you take, leadeth unto destruction? turn ye therefore, turn yee back again, for there is a Christ behind you: O turn ye; for if ye go on in your sins, you perish for ever.

4. Fourthly, here is a yearning promise made unto the world, in the end of the 23. verse; *Lo, I will pour out my spirit unto you, and cause you to understand my words.* As if he should say, return back again with me, & you shall have better welcome than you can possibly have if you go on in your sins: the Devill will never let you gain so much by your living in your lusts, as you shall do by repentance

repentance for them, and forsaking of them. For behold, I will pour out my spirit upon you, whereby you shall be far greater gainers than you shall be by your sinnes.

Fifthly, here is a gracious threatening against the world, even all those that have loytered out the day of grace. As time and tyde stay for no man, no more doth the day of grace: *Because I have called, and you refused; I have exhorted but you have not regarded; I have denounced judgments gainst you for your sins, but you have hardened your hearts; now a day of woe and misery shall come upon you, a time of vengeance and desolation shall over-take you; there will a day come wherein there will be weeping, and crying Mercy (Lord) mercy; but I tell you beforehand what you shall trust to: let this be your lesson, now I call, and you will not hear; now I stretch out my hands, but you will not regard: you shall seek me early, but you shall not find me; and shall cry, but you shall not be heard.*

The words are underclapt against all those that procrastinate their repentance, & returning home unto God, wherein note, first, *the parties themselves* that do prolong this day of grace, *they*: that is, they who when God calls on them, will not hear; when God invites him by his mercies, patience, and forbearance, by his Ministers and servants, by his corrections and judgement, by all fair means and foul means; yet withstand the means of grace, *they* are the men, *they* shall call, but God will not answer.

Secondly, .

2 Secondly, here is *their seeking after God*: they shall call upon me.

3 Thirdly, here is *their earnest and diligent seeking after God*; they shall not only call, but seek too, and not only seek, but seek as to labour to find: nay they shall seek me *early*: even strive to go about it with all hast, and flye to repentance, *but they shall not find me.*

4 Fourthly, here is *the unseasonableness of the time* of their seeking, *then*: that is a demonstrative, *then*; even a time which the Lord appoints at: as if he should say, you shall see *then* these men will be of another mind, *then* they shall be glad to be converted, *then* they shall be glad to come out of their sinnes, *then* they shall be glad to get grace, and seek reconciliation with God: but alas! they saw not this *then*, but God foresaw it well enough; *then shall they call but I will not answer, they shall seek me early but they shall not find me.*

5 Lastly, here is the *frustration of their hope*, which hath two things in it. First, *in regard of themselves*, in regard of the flaw in their seeking, it being not aright. Secondly, *in regard of the justice of God*, who rewards every man according to their works, *But I will not hear them.* Whence observe this point of Doctrine.

Doct. 1 *Those that will not hear when he calleth them; God will not hear them, when they call unto him.* Those that will not hear the Lord when he calleth upon them by the ministry of his Word, and voyce of his Spirit, the Lord will not

not hear them, when in their misery they call upon him.

Thus the Lord dealt with the people in *Ezekiels* dayes; the Lord called them to repentance and obedience : but when they stood out, and neglected the opportunity of grace, and seasons of conversion, see how God deals with them : *though they cry in mine ears with a loud voyce, yet I will not hear them* (saith the Lord.) When men have gone beyond *the time* of Gods mercie; and out-rowed the tyde of Gods forbearance, and will not return, the Lord sets it down with himself, that his wrath shall return upon them, he will no longer forbear : they had a *time* wherein the Lord did pity them, and offered grace, and mercy unto them, but they *neglecting* this season, and withstanding this proffer of grace, God resolves with himself they shall never have it again. There was a time wherein God did pity them, but now he will not pity them any more; *twenty five* years he called unto them, and sought to bring them home; but because they stood out and refused, the Lord saith, *I will love Ephraim no more.*

Beloved, there is a *double* day, a *white* day, and a *black* day; there is a *day of salvation*; *Isa. 49, 9.* this is the day in the which the Lord said to the prisoners, *Come forth* : and to those that lye in their sins, *repent and believe.* Now if any man will come forth and humble his soul before the Lord, let him come and welcome, for it is a *day of salvation.* But there is another day of
damnation

damnation, which is a dark day, a black and a duskie day, wherein the Lord will visit the finnes of the world, and revenge the quarrell of his Covenant. *Hos. 9.7. The day of visitation is come yea the day of recompence; the people shall know it; the Prophet is a fool, and the spirituall man is mad.* Beloved, we are fools, and all the spirituall men under heaven are mad, that lay not this day to heart. For the day of the Lord is a day of visitation, and all the world shall rue it, though now men sleep in securitie. If once mercie be rejected, and God turn away his ear from a man, then grace shall be no more, the doore of life shall for ever be shut up against him: and when once this day comes, he hath lost his own place, and deprived himself of eternall happinesse.

Reas. 1

Now there are *three reasons* of this point, the first is *the law of retaliation*, of tending like for like, which is the justest law that can be made with man, for to give unto every man according to his works, to make him take such as he brings. (as the Heathen calls it) to give a man *quid* for *quo*. Now if God call upon thee, and thou wilt not hear; it is righteousness with God, yea equity with God (that is more) that when thou callest on him, he should not hear thee. For thus, runs the tenor of Gods Word, *Prov. 28.9. He that turns away his ear from hearing the Law, even his prayers shall be abominable.* He that turns away his ear from Gods Law, God will turn away his care from his prayer. He that *turns*, it is spoken in the present tence, that

is, he that *now* turns away his ear, his prayer *shall* be abominable (in the future tense) that is, the Lord marks what master or servant, what father or mother, what husband or wife, what man or woman it is, that turns away the ear of his head or the ear of his heart, from hearing his will, and obeying of his Commandements, the Lord takes *speciall* notice of it, and sets it down in his Calander, and records it in his Memoriall; keeping a strict account thereof; as if God should say, Well, is it so? *I now call*, and will not this man or that woman *answer*? Do I now stretch out my hands; and will not they take care to obey me? Well, let them alone (saith God) there is a day coming, that I shal be a hearing of them; times of sorrow and misery will take hold of them, and then they in their affliction will cry unto me, but I will not hear; they will beg for mercy, but I will not regard; they will *seek me early*, but they shall *not find me*.

It was one of the Articles of high Treason brought in against Cardinal *Woolsey*, that he had the pox, and a stinking breath, & yet durst come into the Kings presence: So it shall be an Article against thee of high treason before the King of heaven, if thou come into his *presence* with the stinking breath of thy sins, living in thy lusts, and wallowing in thy filthinesse, all thy prayers are but as so many stinking breaths, in the nostrils of the Lord; & every duty that thou performest unto the Lord, shall be as so many Articles of high treason against thee, to condemn thee,

because thou livest in rebellion, and a Traitor against God.

His prayer shall be abominable: he doth not say, I will turn away mine ear from hearing his prayer, which turns away his ear from hearing my Law (that is the true exposition of the words) no, but, like for like is sometimes, in justice: for if a man should strike a *Magistrate* a box on the ear, it were not justice for him to give him another: for, it is a greater sin to strike a *Magistrate* than any other *common* person; & therefore a greater punishment the Law requireth: So God doth not say, he will turn away his ear from hearing his prayer, but will serve him in a worse kind, he will count it *abominable*, yea *abomination*, (in the abstract) it shall be loathsome, yea loathsomnesse it self in the worst manner. *Galat. As a man soweth so shall he reap, if thou sow sparingly, thou shalt reap sparingly*: if thou sow a dull ear to Gods Word, thou shalt reap a dull ear from God to thy prayer: for God will reward every man according to his works.

Secondly, *because of the time of Gods attributes*, both *mercy* and *justice*, have their season in this life; and when mercie hath acted her part, then cometh justice upon the stage, and acteth her part; so that God will have his attributes manifested to all the sonnes of men, yea to the face of the whole world. There is no market, nor Fair day that lasteth alwaies: if the countrey will not come in, the Tradesmen will put up.

up their wares, and be gone; but if they come in time, they may have a penniworth; otherwise if they come too late, they will find none. For the Merchant will not alwaies dwell in tents, but away he goeth, and will not stay for them. Beloved, Gods standing is now open, and his shop set wide unto the sons of men; if men will not come in, cheapen and buy without money, whiles God offers his wares, he will put them up and be gone. For the Merchant will not lose his wares, which he should do, if he should alwaies remain in the open ayr with them; if he alwaies continue in the fields expecting customers, his wares would, spoil and rot. So it is with God, how many sweet counsels doth he lose? how many sweet exhortations? how many blessed Sermons, and holy Sacraments, and Sabbaths, doth he lose? how many checks of conscience? how many daies of grace, and motions of his spirit have been squandred away in vain? do you think that God will lose all these; and let them rot upon the stall, with staying for you? No, no: the day of grace and mercy will have an end, and grace and mercie will have an end; and then the day of wrath and vengeance will step up. *To day, if you will hear his voyce, then harden not your hearts: but they hardened their hearts, and would not be led by Gods mercies to forsake their sins, Therefore he swaie in his wrath that they should never enter into his rest.* If it be so with you as it was with Israel in the wilderness, in the day of temptation, you do not

know but that your finnes may now begin to pluck vengeance upon you. I tell you, if you harden your hearts this day, you do not know but this very day the Lord may clap an oath upon your heads, that you shall never enter into his rest. For, one and the self same occasion lasts not *alwaies*: as every day is not a market day, nor every week in the year a Fayr week, nor every Season in the year is a time of Spring or Harvest; so every day of a mans life may not claim to be the *day of grace*. Therefore if a man fore-slow it, now, he fore-sloweth his own happineffe, and putteth off his own peace for ever.

Excellent is that annotation of *Gregory* on *Job. 27. 9. Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?* Beloved, now, Gods patience is troubled, wilt not thou repent? Now, Gods Spirit is troubled, wilt thou not obey? Now Gods Justice is troubled, wilt not thou relent? Now Gods word it troubled, wilt thou refuse to hearken? *Will God hear his cry?* He speaketh interogatively, as if he should say, Art thou so mad, so vain, so foolish, to promise to thy self being an hypocrite, that God will hear thy prayer? Oh no, then, justice cometh to take place.

Reason 3.

Thirdly, it is Gods use to do so in other things, even upon the contempt of temporall blessing; and therefore much more in matters of grace and salvation. Thus God promised to give Israel the Land of Canaan, *Num. 12. 22.* but the

the text saith, *They tempted God ten times*, that is, (as some Expositors expound it) many times : or (as others) *ten* several times. But what ever the meaning of the text be, certainly it was very many times ; so long, til at last *he swore in his wrath, that they should never enter into his rest.* Beloved, though there be many a hot swearer that regards not an oath; yet certainly if the Lord swear, we may beleeve him: the *Word* of God is as strong as *oaths*; if he say it upon his Word, we are bound to beleeve it ; how much more then, when he confirms it with an Oath? Therefore if the Lord swear thou shalt not, how darest thou, how canst thou hope or think ever to enter into his rest? This was almost forty years before they died, that the Lord made this oath against them, and God knows how many thousands of them fell short, not only of the land of Canaan; but also of the Kingdom of Heaven.

So God took *Ismael* an hundred and seventeen years before he dyed: *twenty* years God offered him grace and repentance, but he would not take warning, a mocker he was, and a mocker he would be; for he mocked *Isaac* when he was a child of *six* years old ; and no means would reclaim him, before he heard the voice, *Cast out the Bond woman and her Son* : Out with him, (saith God) for he shall never be heir with my Son: this was an hundred and seventeen years before *Ismaels* death.

And so God took *Saul*, five and thirty, or six and thirty years before he dyed, according to

Iosephus Chronology, (if it be true ;) howsoever, hee took him diversie yeares before his death ; for so the Scripture makes it plain, 1. Samuel 15. 29. The strength of Israel will not lye, nor repent : for he is not a man that he should repent. Therefore because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord also hath rejected thee from being a King. And do not think that thou by thy prayers, and crying God mercy, canst ever alter him : for his counsel is immutable, and he is strong in his decree, and cannot change. Hitherto Grace and Mercy have been offered thee, which if thou hadst embraced, thou mightst have found mercy from the Lord, and the Kingdom should have been established and confirmed unto thee : but now it is too late : for the strength of Israel cannot lye.

God took *Esau* fifty years before his death : for so long he lived, after he sought the blessing with tears : but he was a hunting when God was a calling : he was following his prophane-nesse when God was woking him to repentance. At last when he called for repentance, & sought it earnestly ; yea his soul was carefull for to get it ; yet he could never obtain it, though he sought it earnestly with tears, fifty years before he dyed.

Now if the Lord so severely punish contempt of *temporal* blessings, O how will he punish the contempt of proffers of *grace* and *salvation* ; I tell you God will be more strict in revenging of this sinne, than of any other sinne : he

he will come with Martial Law against all those that contemn the Gospel, *Iob. 3. 18. He that beleeueth not, is condemned already.* Doth Christ preach repentance and salvation, and the Kingdom of God; and wilt thou not repent and beleeve? Martial Law (beloved) martial Law saith, Hang him up, for he is condemned already. Even like a souldier that rebels against his General, and forsake his Colours, they do not cast him into prison, & stay for the Assizes, or Sessions, but give him Martial Law, even hang him up; So, if the Lord found his Gospel in thine ears, and offers the conditions of peace, knocking at the door of thy heart by his Spirit, and thou refuse to open to him, thou art condemned already: for *the Strength of Israel cannot lye, nor repent.* Oh therefore take heed now whiles his word sounds in thine ears, while his Spirit secretly whispers in thy heart to thee that thou open to him, for else thou art condemned for ever.

Take notice then, that God doth commonly give men a day, & no man or Angel doth know *how long* this day lasteth. To some it lasteth to their last gasp; to some, to their old age; and to some it is cut off in their childhood, God gave the Angels a day, the which because they neglected, they are reserved in chains of darknesse until the great judgement day. God gave *Cain* a day, *Gen. 4.* During all the time of this day; though *Cain* sinned again and again, and went on in his sins a great while, yet he heard nothing but a stil voice, *If thou do well, Cain, shalt thou not*

be accepted? but if thou dost ill, sinne lyeth at the door. But when no means will prevail, but *Cain* will go on adding sinne to sinne, and murder unto all the rest of his sinnes, and so let go the season of mercy, the Lord tells him from heaven, that the day of grace is past, the gate of mercy is shut against thee; for *thou art now accursed from the earth.* As if the Lord should say, Before I gave thee a day of salvation, & offered thee mercy, but thou wouldest not accept of it; but now I have clapt a curse upon thy soul, that thou shalt never claw off. So God gave *Nineveh* a time to repent, *Iona 3. Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed.* God gave the Fig-tree a day, even three years before he would have it cut down. God gave the old World a day of an hundred and twenty years; during this time God sent unto them *Noah*, a Preacher of righteousness, to call upon them to repent, & so set it down also, that *his Spirit shall not always strive with man, but his time shall be an hundred and twenty years*: yet one writes, that the Lord cut off twenty of the hundred and twenty years, because of their iniquities, which were so grievous, & provoked him so much, that they hastened him to come before he would have done it. In all this space if they had repented, they should have found mercy from the Lord: but when this time was gone, and the day of grace was out, the Deluge came in upon them, and God by his judgments overthrew the whole World.

Object.

You may ask me *when this day or season of grace doth end, or cease.*

I answer, that neither men nor Angels can *Answ.*
 tell; but this I say, *is may be this day of grace*
lasteth unto thee, now it may be God speaketh
 home to thy soul, now it may be God warms
 thy heart, and gives thee good purposes and
 resolutions: now it may be the Lord Jesus pas-
 seth by thee in a good thought and desire; lay
 hold on it, *for thy day may cease this very night*,
 for ought thou knowest. *Luke 17. 22. The time*
shall come (saith Christ) when you shall desire to see
one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see
it. Now is the day of Christ upon you, now is
 Christ offering and preaching himself to you;
 but if you let *this* pay passe, thou mayst desire to
 have one of the drops of that blood that hath
 been offered to thee, and yet never have it: thou
 mayst desire to feel one rap of his Spirit that
 hath knockt at thy heart and yet goe without
 it, thou mayst intreat for one dram of that
 mercy that hath been offered, and thou hast re-
 jected, but it shall never be granted to thee: God
 may clap that fearfull sentence upon thee, *Now*
henceforth never grow fruit more on thee, never re-
pentance come into thy heart more. If now
 thou wilt not repent and be converted, the Lord
 may set it down in his decree from this day for-
 ward, that thou mayst fumble about thy sinnes,
 but shalt never get victory over them: thou
 mayest ever be mourning for thy corruptions,
 but never mourn aright for them: thou mayest
 blunder about repentance, but never *doe the*
work.

Ezekiel

Ezekiel 24. 23. You shall not mourn nor weep, but you shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one towards another. There is many a soul for contemning of God, and not taking up repentance while he may have it, upon whom this plague of God is come, that they are ever repenting, & are never able to repent, ever poring upon their sins, but never able to come out of them; they pray and pray against them, but their prayers moulder away under them: for they shall pine away for their iniquities. What is the reason? he sheweth in the 13 verse: Because I would have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged any more. Because I gave thee line upon line, precept upon precept, motion upon motion, Sacrament upon Sacrament, Sabbath upon Sabbath, and Ordinance upon Ordinance, because I used all fair means and fould means, I awaked thy conscience, and stirred up the motions of grace in thee; but because I would have cleansed thee, and thou wast not cleansed, thou shalt never be cleansed. A fearfull sentence it is, if mens hearts were soundly opened to consider rightly of it.

And as there is a personal day, so there is a national day; if the Nation turn unto God during that time, then that Nation shall find mercy; but if they neglect that day, then God will hide those things from their eyes that belong to their peace, as Christ saith of Jerusalem, Luke 19. 42. O Ierusalem, if thou hadst known in this thy day those things that did belong to thy peace! but now they

they are hid from thine eyes: in this thy day; if thou hadst known it during that day, it had been happy for thee; but now the day of grace is gone, the Lord hath concealed it from thee, and thou shalt never perceive it any more.

Some mens day of grace God endeth even in their very *childhood*; therefore if there be any little ones, any children here in this congregation, that are of age to know what belongs unto an exhortation, to them I speak, that they take heed how they rebell against the commandment of a Father, or a Mother, or Master, against the teaching of Gods Word, for though you be *children*, yet God may inflict judgements upon your heads, for not only the day of *grace*, but also the day of *life* may be cut off from children, as 2 Kings 2, 24. two and forty children were torn in pieces for mocking the Lords Prophet. Some mens day of grace is not shut up until their *youth*, some not until their old age, some not until they are a *dying*; and if they refuse then, they are like, yea, sure to perish for ever; I know the day of grace may have several returns; but at last Gods Exchequer will be finally shut up.

May not a man be called at the eleventh or twelfth hour of the day? The day of grace lasteth not always; and doth not the Apostle call the day of life, the day of grace? 2 Cor. 6. 2.

It is true, *the Lord calleth men at the eleventh and twelfth hour*; but yet, look and you shall see in the twentieth of *Mathew*, that they

were

Object.

Ans.

were not called at the first hour, nor at the second, nor third hour, nor at the sixth and ninth hour, *i.* he doth not say he found the *same* men that he found at the first, & third, sixth and ninth hours, but he saw *others* standing idle: No, those that were called at the first hour, came in at the first hour; and they that were called at the third hour, came in at the third hour; and they that were called at the sixth and ninth hour, came in at the sixth and ninth hour. Well, doth God call thee in thy childhood, in thy youth, or in thy middle age, now at the first or sixth, or ninth hour, now come in and labour in Gods Vineyard, *and work not your salvation with fear and trembling*, and make use of the season of grace, now whiles it is upon you: for if thou be called the *first* hour, the *sixth* is for another, and not for thee; if thou be called the sixth hour, the ninth hour is for others, and not for thee; if thou be called the ninth hour, the eleventh hour is for others and not for thee; The Text saith, *He came and found others standing idle in the Market place, and said unto them, Why stand yee here idle? And they said unto him, No man hath hired us:* as if they should say, We never had any means of salvation, we have had no Ministers to preach unto us; but now God calls upon thee to come in, *this is thy hour*, look unto it. If God call thee, see thou come in, whether it be at the first or third hour, at the sixth or ninth hour, lest the Lord in his wrath clap hardnesse of heart upon thy soul.

But

But you will say, *that the day of life, and the day of grace are parallel'd and likened one to another; and therefore there is hope so long as a man remains in the Congregation of the living.*

Object.

I answer, it is true indeed, that *the day of grace lasteth so long as the day of life:* 1. *In regard of others,* for others are so to esteem of it, the Minister is to look to his people, as to a people to be converted as long as they live.

Answer.

1. *In regard of a mans own self, he is so bound to believe,* for the commandment of faith standeth in force on a man, so long as he liveth, and therefore infidelity and despaire cease not to be sins, till a man be *actually*, in hell; when he is in hell, then they are no sins, because then he is not commanded to believe, but are part of the *punishment* of the damned; but whilst a man lives it is a *sinne*, for men are now bound to lay hold upon Christ and to believe, at what hour of their life soever.

3. It may be said to last all a mans life long, *because it is bounded within the compasse of life:* for no man hath a day of grace after this life.

But what is the meaning of all those Scriptures which show how God doth deliver up men unto the Spirit of giddinesse, and unto the Spirit of slumber? And what means the *hardning of mens hearts*, and *searing of mens Consciences*, but only to show that the day of grace may end unto a particular man, ten, twenty, nay, forty years before his death.

I. Be-

1: Because *God may harden a mans heart,* *Jerem. 13. 10.* and deal with them as with *Israell in the Rock,* So shut up their hearts, that they shall never melt at any Sermon, never be wrought upon by any judgement, God having closed them up in a rocky heart, that he saith of them, *Can the Blackmore change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? then may they do good that are accustomed to do evill.* The Blacknesse of a Blackmore is only in the out-side of the skin, yet all the Art under the heavens cannot blot it out: So if once hardnesse possesse thy soul, all the preaching of the Ministers, and all the means of grace in the world can never bring it unto that frame and temper, as to make it melt under the hand of God; I tell thee, thou that usest to come unto Sermons day after day, and refusest to repent, living still in thy sinnes, there is no hammer nor beetle in the world more hard than thy heart: as those men and woman that sit under the preaching of the Word, and hear the doctrine of life, like, rain from above, beating and knocking on their consciences, and on their hearts, to awaken them out of their sinnes, and yet notwithstanding will not repent at last, they prove to be *deaf Adders,* that stop their ears against the Word; charm the Charmer never so wisely.

2. *God may fear mens consciences;* Doth thy conscience tell thee that thou art a lukewarming, and wilt thou not be reformed? Doth thy conscience tell thee that thy prayers and all thy

thy religion is rotten and unsound, and that thy repentance is hypocriticall and naught; and that for all thy vain hopes, thou art but a dissembler, and yet remainest in thy finnes, and wilt thou not be bettered hereby? Take heed; for that man that runs on in his sin against the voice of his own conscience, that man finnes the sinne of *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 13. 8. God bad him stay seven daies until *Samuel* came: *Saul* staies full seven daies within one hour; at last his lust began to bawl: What? shall I stay for a Prophet thus long? Stay, saies his conscience; Why? (-saies *Saul*) I waited for him so long, even seven daies, lacking but one hour: Stay (saith God to his conscience) for the Word of God bids thee stay so long: he stayed one day, and two daies, and six daies and seven daies but one hour; Stay (saith his conscience:) no, he would not; but *I forced my self*, (saith the Text) as if he should say, I hardened my heart to do it, though the word of the Lord, & my own conscience bad me stay and not do it, yet *I forced my self* to do it: What was this mans sinne! Was it his offering of Sacrifice and calling upon God by prayer? No, the Lord commands us to call upon him in the time of distresse; and being commanded. it was lawfull. Was it his sin to meddle with the Priests office? No: for he did but appoint the Sacrifice, the Priest offered it, What? was it the breaking of one hours time? No: for he had sinned more against God than so: but this was his sinne, that he went against his own conscience,

science, when God stood in the way, when conscience stood in the way; conscience said stay, but he would not stay, God bid him stay, but he would not stay. And this is the sinne of many thousands amongst us; mens *conscienc*es tel them that they must not be *drunkards*, mens *conscienc*es tell them that they must not be *worldlings*, they must not be *swearers*, they must not be *luke-warm* professors, they must *pray better* than they do, and have *other faith* than yet they have, if ever they mean to be saved; wilt thou yet against thy conscience force thy self to go on in thy sins from day to day, and never be reformed? take heed lest the Lord be provoked to set thy sun upon thy head, and shut up thy heart, and conclude thy eternall destruction.

Object. Suppose I go in my sinnes; and follow my wicked courses now; what if I seek him hereafter, and humble my soul before him with fasting and prayer, and when I lye upon my death-bed, I send a ticket unto my Minister to pray for me, will all this do me no good?

Answer. Surely no, (saith God, *Ierem.* 15. 1.) Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my affections could not be towards this people: cast them out of my sight. Dost thou lye sick upon thy death-bed? were Samuel, Job or Daniel the Minister of thy Parish, and thou shouldst send thy ticket unto them, desiring them to remember thee in their prayers; if Noah stood in the Pulpit, and Job and Daniel were here before the Lord to plead for thee, yet he would not hear thee.

Bue

But, suppose I humb'e my self by fasting and prayer, will not God hear that? Object.

No, if thou neglect the day of grace. *Ier. 14. 12. When they fast, I will not hear them: & when they offer oblations, I will not accept their cry: but I will consume them by the sword, by famine and by pestilence.* You may set up your fastings, prayers, and humiliations, you may lament & mourn, and pine away your selves in your sinnes; but it is not all your prayers, and fastings, it is not all your lamentations and mourning, that will doe you good, so long as the counsel of the Lord is rejected. *Because I called and you would not answer; therefore you shall call, but I will not hear;* they thought that the Lords ears would always be open, and that when they called, the Lord would have answered, and that the day of grace would ever remain; but God saith, *I will not hear them: they would never have sought if they thought the Lord would not hear them, but all their seeking was in vain.* Answer

You will say, at what time soever a sinner repenteth he shall have mercy. Object.

It is true, if thou repent from the bottome of thy heart; but thou maiest come with many a degree of repentance, and yet never repent whilst thou livest: if thou repent from thy heart, and root out thy sins, then God will put away thy sinnes; but thou maist go on in repentance and calling upon God, and performing many duties of Religion, and yet be hardened; look how much Religion will stand with self-love, so much thou maist Ans.

mayest have after the day of grace is *gone*. Self-love makes a man flie to prayer, and run after Sermons, and go on in many holy duties, and give over many sins; look how far self-love may drive thee unto *holy* duties, so far thou maist go, and yet notwithstanding remain hardened. O therefore let us not delay, nor put off the time of grace, nor let go salvation while it may be had; *then* shall they call, but I will not answer: he doth not set down *when* this time is; it may be it is *now*, it may be not this seven yeers, it may be not till thy death.

Doctr.

2.

Doctr. *It may be, this very day, even this very Sermon, this very hour may be thy day, that thou art now in thy sins, that if thou repent not at this very one Sermon, thou neglectest eternall life for ever; lose the benefit of this Sermon at this time, and thou maist lose eternall salvation, and never have it more. The thief that robd this day, how doth he know but this one robbery may bring him to the gallows? So the man that sins this day, how doth he know but that this very days work may bring him to hell? Deut: 32. 35. To God belongs vengeance: their feet shall slide in due time.* Therefore if a man sin against him, he may stand to day, and to morrow, and many days; but when the *due time* comes, even the time which God hath set, then up goes his heels, he shall slide and break his neck: thy hour-glasse runs in *heaven*, and thou seest not when the sand comes to the bottom, but when tis out, then down thou goest to hell for ever.

There

There was one resolved to kill *Julius Caesar* such a day; the night before, a friend sent him a letter to acquaint him with it: but being at supper, and busie, I will not look upon it now (saith he) to morrow is a new day. The next day when he should have read his letter, he was stabd; Whence this Proverb came in *Greece*, *To morrow is a new day*. God sends thee a letter and a message from heaven *to day*; hear his voyce *to day*, repent and come out of your sins, or for ever to hell; to day be converted and sanctified, or for ever be hardned. Dost thou refuse to *hearken to day*, and puttest it off untill to morrow? it may be to morrow may be a day of Gods wrath, and then thou maist be hardned, seared, & bound over unto the great day of Gods vengeance; to morrow God may set the decree upon thy soul, that thou shalt never repent. Therefore if thou refuse *this day*, thou refusest all; for what knowest thou, but this very day may be *thy day*?

The reason is, because *Gods patience is in his Reas. 1: own breast*; and who can tell how long it will last? Hast thou *Momus* his glasse-window to look into Gods secret counsell? hast thou a key-hole to look into Gods treasury; canst thou stand on tiptoe, to look over Gods shoulder, to look into Gods decree, to see *how long his* patience will last? It may be God hath suffered thee till this day, thou art guilty of ten thousand sins, & yet he is patient towards thee; God hath stayed thus long for thee, that hast sworn

I know not how many oaths, God hath Borne thus long with thee, that hast told I know not how many lies, prophaned I know not how many Sabbaths, contemned I know not how many ordinances, and slighted I know not how many judgements, yet Gods *patience* is in his own breast, it is the *long-sufferance of God*. Thou mayest say, I would fain have it to morrow, and this seven years, but alas, it is *his* long sufferance and not *thine*: and how dost thou know when he will conclude it? it may be this day as well as to mortow. *Joel 2. 13. Rent your hearts, and not your garments* (saith the Prophet) *for the Lord he is gracious, and mercifull*. This word [*for*] hath a great deal of force in it: *First*, It is a *description* [*for*:] for he is a gracious & a mercifull God: therefore rent thy heart, and let thy soul burst within thee, that thou hast sinned against him: for he is a mercifull God, and it may be he will pardon all thy sinnes, and heal all thy rebellions committed against him.

Secondly, it is an *upbraiding* [*for*:] *upbraiding* thee for thy sinnes: rent thy heart therefore, why? he is a patient God; wilt thou go on in thy sins, against such a *patient* God? and rebel against such a loving Father, that hath loved thee with so much compassion? Rent thy heart, for he is patient.

Thirdly, it is a *comforting and encouraging* [*for*:] rent thy heart for there is encouragement for thee to repent, give over thy sins, and go to the throne of grace; For there is much
mercy

mercy to welcome thee, and great patience to bid thee come home, and abundance of grace to encourage thee; therefore rent thy heart and come home unto the for Lord, he is patient and long suffering.

Fourthly it is a *warning* [for:] rent your hearts, for the Lord is gracious and mercifull, slow to anger, and of great kindnesse; yet his mercy lasteth, yet his patience endureth, yet he hath all his attributes, and yet he is pleased to manifest the same, still tending grace and mercy unto thee. O turn unto him, while these endure, or else thou shalt perish for ever.

Fifthly, it is a *threatning* [for:] now he is gracious, now he is mercifull, but his mercy will end, his patience will end, and then if thou hast not rent thy heart before, it will be too late then. Therefore as ever thou lovest thine own soul, now rent thy heart and turn unto God.

It is Gods own proclamation; *The Lord, the Lord, slow to anger, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity & sin.* Yea what man soever it be, that humbles his soul before him, he shall find grace and mercy with him; yea abundance of mercy, pardoning iniquity, transgression & sin; yea any thing: Let but a soul come prostrate before him, humbling his soul, he will pardon his sin. But as it followeth in the words, *He will by no means clear the guilty;* if notwithstanding all Gods patience and mercy, thou go on in thy sins, the Lord will never forgive thee, but will visit thy sinnes upon thee unto the third and

fourth generations, because thou hast withstood the day of grace. Belov d, men run on in their sins, as if an Angell from heaven should cry unto them and tell them, yet God will be good unto them, yet God will show them mercy, and forbear them. Beloved, let your consciences answer, if you ever heard the Lord God say to any of you, thus long I will forbear you. No, Gods patience is in his own breast, and therefore no man knows how long it will last.

Reason 2. A second reason is, *because Gods patience giveth no mark nor inkling of it, before it ends:* commonly when God strikes a man with death, he giveth some signs and warnings of it before, as sicknesse, and pains, and grey-hairs, and many sorrows, &c. Now because thy life is in Gods hands, thou carest not for it, but venturést to go on in thy sins, hoping to have some warning. though thousands be cut off without it; but the day of grace may come to an end, and yet thou never have any inkling or warning of it before-hand: commonly when God strikes a man with death, he tels him of it before hand by aches, and pains, as if the Lord should say, Now thou shalt dye, now wil I take thee out of the world. But when the Lord taketh away the day of grace from a man, though the spirituall man may take some notice of it, yet there is no sensible apparition of it, but after the day of grace is set upon a man, he may be as strong and lusty as before, he may come to church as well after as before, perform religious duties, and doe many good things

things as well after as before ; as *Saul* went on in duties of Religion , as well after *Samuel* had pronounced the Lords doom upon him ; how many times was he offering Sacrifices unto the Lord after the Prophet told him, that he was a man rejected ? how many good speeches came from him ? as when *Samuel* met him , he salutes him with these words ; *blessed be thou of the Lord, I pray thee turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord.* A man would have thought that *Saul* had been a good convert. No, no, before all this his judgment and doom was set upon him ; God steals upon him and says nothing ; he claps his plague upon their souls , and holds his peace.

Isaiah 42. 14. I have a long time beld my peace, I have been still, and refrained my self; now will I cry like a travelling woman, I will destroy and devour at once. The Lord shews here how he deals with men, they go on in their sins, but the Lord holds his peace; they provoke him every day, but the Lord refrains his anger: but now all at once his wrath breaketh forth upon them, *Pf. 64. 7. God will shoot an arrow at them suddenly,* their stroke will be at once. The Lord suddenly shoots a swift arrow at thee; no sooner it is shot, but it enters into thy bowels. When the Lord comes upon a man , he comes suddenly; when he ends the day of grace upon him, he doth it suddenly. He ended the day of grace on the Scribes and Pharisees even in the very Sermon time , while Christ was preaching unto them , they were de-

livered up to hardnesse of heart: so many were delivered up to hardnesse of heart in the time of *Hosea's* propheticie, *Hos. 4. 17. Ephraim is joy- ned to Idols; let him alone* (saith God,) as if he should say, Sermon, let him alone; Preacher, let him alone; Spirit, let him alone; Christ, let him alone; Beloved if we stand out against God, and reject the *day* of grace, the Lord may say, Word, let such a man alone, & never convert him; Christ, let such a man alone, and never redeem him; Spirit, let such a man alone, and never sanctifie him; Sacrament, let such a man alone, & never seal up any comforts unto him: a fearfull sign that men are come to this hour; do we not see that men come to the word, and the Word lets them alone in their sins? do not men come to the Sacrament, and the Sacrament leaves them still in their filthinesse? men come unto good duties, but good duties let them alone, and do them no good, and this is the condition of many thousands in the world; Therefore Oh think upon this, you that have made a league with your sins, and an agreement with hell: hear this dellivered to you this day, that the day of grace may be ended, and God may come and clap his curse upon men, and never give them any inkling of it at all.

Reas. 3. A third reason is, because God reckons up every hour; if God kept not a strict account of time, how many Sermons you have heard, how many mercies you have enjoyed, how many crosses he hath warned you by, if God kept not a true

true tale and account of every hours time, you might rub on many daies, and months, and years, and spend much time in fulfilling your lusts, but God keepeth a reckoning of these things, yea of every hour, and of every minute, *Acts 17. 30. The times of ignorance God regarded not; but now he admonisheth all men to repent.* Alas, when men live in their sins through blindness and ignorance, and know not God, the Lord takes no such strict notice of them, but lets them go on longer and longer; but when the Lord sends them his Word and Gospel, & affords them the means of grace, he doth the more strictly look upon them, and takes the more exact account of them; before they had the means of grace, the Lord winked at them, and did not so narrowly watch them, but looked over mens ignorance, (as the originall hath it) but now God sends the Word and Gospel, he *admonisheth all men to repent*, he winks at never an hour, but sets down how oft thou hast an exhortation from thy Minister, how often thou hast had warning by sickness and afflictions, how often thou hast had checks from thine own conscience, how many admonitions thou hast had from thy friends, how many times thou hast had the sound of the Gospel to sound in thy ears to bring thee home unto God, *John 2. 7. 11: This is the first beginning of miracles that Iesus did, Ioh. 4. 58. This is the second miracle that Iesus did,* saith the Text, God sets down, this is the first, this is the second time: *this is the second epistle I wrote to*

you

you, saith Paul, Oh this is the third time I wrote unto you, 2. Cor. 13. that when I come I will not spare: so God sets it down in his catalogue, this is the first time that I have warned this man, this is the second time, this is the third time, that when I come I will not spare; the Lord accounts how long he hath sought unto thee, and intreated thee by his mercies, how long he hath assured thee by his word, how long he hath warned thee by his judgements, how oft he hath smote thy heart with fears, and thy conscience with terrors. Now if for all this thou wilt not return, just is it with God to cast thee down to hell for ever.

Reas. 4. The fourth Reason and last: *It is a wonder that the day of grace is not ended already, and that thou art not now in hell.* When a thing in this kind is looked for to be done, it is a wonder that it is not done: It is a wonderfull mercy of God unto this Kingdom that yet the day of grace is continued amongst us, in regard of our long fear and expectation of the contrary. For from the highest to the lowest we have highly revolted more and more, and provoked God to his very face. What contempt of Gods Word? what neglect of God Ordinances? what prophanation of Gods Sabbaths? what scoffing and deriding of Gods servants? how doth wickedness & prophaneesse, stand up in the highest room, climb up into the highest chambers? But as a whore condemned to die being with childe, is reprieved for a time, untill her child be brought forth: so this Land

Land hath gone a whoring from God, yet so long as God hath some children to be brought forth, which are not yet come unto the birth, he lets his grace and Gospell continue untill these children be brought forth. Therefore now (beloved) if we stick at the birth, and come not forth, a hundred to one but we shall mis-carry.

When Christ comes first to the soul, he witnesseth grace and mercy to thee, if thou wilt repent and amend; yea he witnesseth forgiveness of sins, redemption and salvation, if thou wilt beleve; but if not, he will be a *witnesse against thee*, Malachi 3. 5. if thou continue and goest on in thy sins: *Agree with thine adversary, while thou art in the way quickly*, Matt. 5. 25. Now God is in the way with thee; Christ and his Spirit are in the way with thee; thou needest not now say, *who shall go up to heaven and bring down the Spirit* to thee; Christs Spirit is now knocking at thy heart, and now God offers his mercy to thee, now thou art in the way, now he calls unto thee to accept of his mercy, now he commands thee to take Christ, now hear him calling to thy heart, now he tenders grace unto thee, embrace it; now receive Christ and make up thy peace with him: remember the saying of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves whether ye be in the faith; prove your selves, know you not your own selves, how that Iesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates?* As if the Apostle should say, I have been an Apostle to you this year and half, I have preached thus & thus long
unto

unto you, I have wrote one Epistle to you to reform those abuses that were among you, and now I write the second Epistle, to declare the whole will and counsell of God to you. Now cast up your reckoning, examine your selves, and make up your account: see if you have gained Christ. O, I have Christ (saith one) I have Christ, (saith a nother,) I, but *prove it*, saith the Apostle, and try your selves: know ye not that by this time *Christ is in you*, or else you be *reprobates*? As if he should say, if yet Christ be not in you, and grace wrought in your hearts, if yet you lye festred in your sins, and go on in your wicked ways, it is to be feared you are reprobates: either you or we are reprobates, you for not obeying, or we for not delivering the truth of God unto you. *But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates*, verse 6. God forbid that this word should be ever spoken unto any soul in this congregation: but this let me say, is there any man here that goes on in his lusts, and in his carnall course of live, in pride, security, hardnesse of heart, and impenitency, that hath not the soundnesse of grace? he hath a fearfull sign and brand of a reprobate, whose conscience is stified: it is fearfull sign, if he be not a reprobate before God, yet that he is one that is not *approved* but for the present in a wretched & miserable condition. Now is the time of grace wherein God hath spoken to your souls, remember that vengeance that is comming toward you if it be rejected; now the Lords fat-

lings

lings are ready; his Oxen, and Sheep are slain,
and laid upon the board; Christ is sacrificed,
and his blood is shed, and the grace of the Lord
Jesus Christ is tendred to you; you that have
grace, get more grace; you that have no grace,
get grace and Christ, and take heed of neglecting
any opportunity of grace, for that may come
unto thee in one hour, that will never come a-
gain.

VAIN
THOUGHTS
ARRAIGNED

At the Barr of Gods
JUSTICE,

SET FORTH

In a SERMON preached, at
Linton in Kent,

By that Reverend and faithfull Mi-
nister of Gods VVord,

WILLIAM FENNER, B. D.

Sometimes Fellow of *Pembroke Hall*
in *Cambridge*, and late Pastor
of *Rochford in Essex.*



London, Printed by *F. L.* for *John Stafford.*

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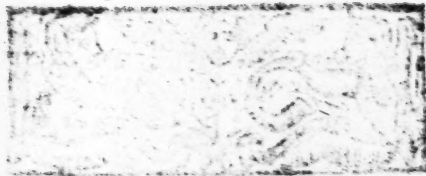
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A SERMON OF

Mr. WILLIAM FENNERS,

Preached at Linton, Septemb. 9. 1629.

PHIL. 3. 18, 19.

For, many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the Crosse of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose belly is their God, whose glory is their shame, and who mind earthly things.

THE Apostle in the closure of this Chapter, setteth out unto us a two-fold kind of life: First, the life of the Godly, and that 1. by way of Exhortation, verse 17. *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as you have us for an example:* 2. By way of declaration,

on, verse 20. *But our conversation is in heaven, whence also we look for the Saviour, even the Lord Iesus Christ.* Then secondly, he sets forth unto us the life of the wicked, which walked otherwise than the Disciples and Apostles of Christ walked, in these words read unto you. The Apostle warned those wicked men again and again; but they would not take warning, neither did they think themselves so bad as he made them, and therefore they thought they should speed well enough; he preached to them in the Pulpit, and wrote unto them, though he were six hundred miles & more distant from them (and that weeping too) that they were *enemies to the Crosse of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, who mind earthly things.*

These words may be construed two ways; either as being meant, 1. *Of several wicked men*, as first of Heterodox walkers, such as walk contrary to the Apostles: or, 2. *Of wicked persecutors of the Gospel, enemies to the Crosse of Christ:* 3. *Of Drunkards and Hypocrites, whose God is their belly;* 4. *Of Ambitious and proud persons, whose glory is their shame:* and 5. *Of covetous and carnal minded men, who mind earthly things:* or as Chrysostom expounds the words (and so it seems is the meaning of them) to be meant of one sort of men, *who mind earthly things*, they are such as walk otherwise than the Apostle walked. Who are they that *mind earthly things*? they are *enemies of the Crosse of Christ*: Who are they that *mind earthly things*: Whose hearts

hearts & affections run more after the things of this life, than after the cross of Christ; Their *God is their belly*. Who are they that *mind earthly things*, and think only how to increase their living & enlarge their estate, and make them sure unto themselves? their *glory is their shame*. Who are they that *mind earthly things*? that give their hearts (the flower of man) and their affections (the flower of their Souls) unto the world, and unto the base things of the word, still they are they that mind earthly things, which set either their loving thoughts, or their raking and caring thoughts, or their fretting and vexing thoughts, or the eager, covetous and vain thoughts on earthly things, they are they that walk otherwise than the Apostles of Christ walked; These are those that are *enemies to the cross of Christ, whose God is their belly, whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things, whose end is destruction*,

Hence then will we observe this point.

That *those whose minds and hearts run habitually on earth and earthly things, their end must needs be destruction*.

Jeremiah 6. 19. Hear O earth (saith God) behold I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkned unto me, but rejected my Law. Wherein we may see 3 things, 1. That the curse of God is the desert of cursed, evil & vain thoughts: 2. That the plague and curse of God is the event of evil and vain thoughts; evil thoughts do not only deserve

Gods plagues, but also bring them : 3. Here is notice given to all the world ; *Hear, O earth :* as if he had said , here is a reckoning that you little dream of, I will bring a plague upon you , not only for your idolatry , for your whoredom and fornication , but even for your vain thoughts, *Prov. 24.9. The thoughts of the wicked are sin ;* The Lord doth not only condemn the actions and courses of wicked men , but sets his curse upon their very thoughts. Sin is of an homogeneal nature , of which every part of a thing is the whole ; every piece of stone is stone , for it hath the nature of the whole : even so it is with sin, the least part of sin, the least thought of sin, the least shiver of sin, is sin, and abominable before God.

Reason 1. The reasons why those whose hearts and thoughts run habitually on earth and earthly things, must needs end in destruction, are 1. *That mans end must needs end in destruction, that never repents :* Now , so long as a mans thoughts run usually and habitually on the things of the world, that man never repents ; repentance not only cleanseth the out-side of man, but the inside also, even the heart ; repentance goeth as far as the Law of God goeth : where the word of God begins, there repentance must needs begin ; now the word of God begins and strikes at the heart, as saith the Apostle, *The Word of God is sharp and powerfull, sharper than any two-edged sword, peircing to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the joynts and marrow, & is a discerner*

of

of the thoughts of the heart, Heb. 4. 12. Now then, if the word of God strike at the thoughts of the heart, then repentance must go and teach so farr to reform and amend the things of the heart, or else he never repents. Let a man sweep his house never so much, yet it is not clean so long as there remains one Cob-web in it: so if thy heart be swept from drunkenness, whoring, and swearing, and yet if the old Cob-web of vaine thoughts remain in any corner of thy heart, not washed out, nor swept down, thou hast not as yet repented: *Oh Ierusalem* (saith God by his Prophet) *wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved: how long shall thy vaine thoughts lodge within thee?* Jer. 4. 14. Mark, how the Lord *inforceth* his exhortation: see how he backs his counsell [*that thou mayest be saved:*] as if he had said, thou canst not be saved, unlesse thou wash thy heart from vaine thoughts: *how long shall thy vaine thoughts lodge within thee?* He doth not say, why do vaine thoughts come into thee? for they will come into the best and most holy heart, but how long shall they lodge within thee? If vaine thoughts do lodge in man, and take up their nest in his heart, if a man let his thoughts dwell upon vaine things, and he give way unto them, & use them as his market, trade and recreations, he cannot be saved; it is an *emphaticall* kind of speech: as if the Lord should say, *O Ierusalem, thou never considerest this,* and thus he doth as it were pittie and compassionate them in their blindness and ignorance, and

horrible besottedness, that think that thought is free. Beloved, when the Lord comes to reckon with the world, he will not only reckon with them for their pounls and shillings, for their hundreds and thousands of sins; for their murders, whoredomes, blaiphemies, &c. but he will call them to an accompt for their least sins, the pence and farthing sinnes, even their very thoughts: *agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way, lest he deliver thee up to the Jaylor & thou be cast into prison: how shalt thou come out untill thou hast paid the utmost farthing;* thou must deliver up thy farthing as well as thy pound sinnes, or else thou never agreeest with thine adversary. When the Lord by his prophet calls upon his people, exhorting them to repentance, he willeth and exhorteth them to *change their thoughts*, Esay 55.7. *Repentance is the change of the thoughts*, according to the English Proverb (*I have changed my thoughts: Look unto thy feet when thou goest into the house of God, Eccles. 5.1.*) Thou canst never go into the House of God without thy feet: the thoughts and affections of the heart, are the feet of the soul; and thou canst never go to God without them; and therefore if thy heart and affections run *habitually* on earthly things, thou didst never repent, and so thine end is damnation.

Reason 3

The second reason is, *that mans end must needs be destruction that hath no Christ in the world:* now so long as thy thoughts run *habitually* on earthly things, thou hast no Christ. It is not enough

nough for a man to hang on Christ, for many a man doth so, and yet is cut off from Christ, and perisheth for ever: thou must not only hang upon Christ, but thou must also *get into* Christ. As in the old world, when the deluge came, and the waters increased so greatly, that the mountains and high hills were covered with them, and the people could not save themselves by getting unto the tops of the mountains, no question but many seeing the *Ark* swim above the water, did climb up and hang upon the sides of the Ark, thinking to save themselves, yet *none* of them were saved, but those that were gotten into the Ark: so, many a man will catch hold of Christ, but his hold will be gone, and he perish for ever, unlesse he get into Christ. Now a man can never get into Christ, unlesse his heart be purged from vain thoughts: For Christ when he entreth into a man, cleanseth his heart from vain thoughts, *2 Cor. 10: 5*. If Christ once come into the heart, he will set up his throne there: he will hold his Scepter of Righteousnesse in it: when Christ cometh, see what a work he will make in the heart, he will not suffer a proud thought to remain there to upbraid him; he will not suffer ever a sinfull lust to stand up to upbraid him; but he will *cast down every imagination, & a' high things that exalt themselves, & he will bring every thought into subjection unto himself*. Therefore if thy thoughts run after the lusts of thy own heart, thou hadst no Christ in thee: for Christ (beloved) wil never dwell in a foul house: I

know there is no wheat without some darnell, no gold without some drosse, no wine without some lees; so there is no man but hath *some* sin; no man so clean, but hath some defilements of sinne upon him; yet if a man have not his cleansing *grace* of Christ in him, cleansing the heart from vain things, there is no Christ in him: for Christ will never dwell in a foul heart. Now beloved, the very vain thoughts of a man defile him: as Christ saith, *Matth. 7. 21, 22, 23. Out of the heart proceedeth evil thoughts, and they are they that defile a man.* All these, not only murder, and adulteries, and uncleanneses, and all other abominable sins, which mens consciences startle at, but *evil thoughts* defile a man: Assure thy self, that so long as the league of these evil thoughts is not broken, thou hast no Christ *as yet*, within thee. Hence is that exhortation of the Apostle, *Colos. 3. 12: If you be risen with Christ, then seek those things that are above.*

Brethren, you must remember that there be *two kinds of exhortations*, in the Scripture: the one, if a man do them, *blessed and happy is he*: the other, if he do them not, yet he may find mercy; it will be a grief and a sorrow to him, but it follows not that he shall miscarry. But there are exhortations that tie to obedience, that must be obeyed, or else there is no salvation; as this exhortation of the Apostle; it is not left to our choyce to do, or not to do, but if a man be risen with Christ he must do it: he must *seek the things that are above*: that man, then, that hath his thoughts

thoughts run habitually on the world, that man hath no Christ in him, and therefore his end must needs be destruction.

Thirdly, *that mans end must needs be destruction that loves not God*; now so long as thy thoughts run habitually on the things of the world, thou hast no true love of God in thee. For thus runs the Commandement of love, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Matth. 22. 37.* It is as if Christ should have said, thou shalt love God, *with all thy heart, and with all thy heart, and with all thy heart*: for the *soul, mind, and heart*, are all one; that no man might dare to keep any part of their heart from God. Every one wil say, I love God with all my heart, I go to Church and serve God with all my heart, I hear the Word and pray withall my heart, I receive the Sacraments withall my heart: Dost thou so? and yet let thy thoughts *run* upon the world? dost thou pray, and yet let vaine thoughts lodge within thee? dost thou hear the Word, receive the Sacraments, and yet lettest vaine thoughts *distract* thee? Dost thou walk in thy calling, and yet lettest vaine thoughts steal away thy heart, and yet sayest thou, I love God with all my heart, when thou takest away thy heart from God? How dost thou think thy thoughts? with thy heels, or with thy heart? Surely thou sayest, with thy heart: Why then if thou lovest God with all thy heart, thou must give thy thoughts unto God; God hat cals for thy heart, cals for all thy heart: now
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Reason 3

the heart is nothing but all a mans heart; all the affections and desires, all turnings and windings, all thoughts that are in the heart do but make up the heart: and therefore when God calls for thy heart, he calls for all the powers and faculties, of the soul. And therefore, the Prophet David would bless God *with his soul and all that was within him.* Psal. 103. So thou must give thy thoughts, and all that is within thee to God, or else thou givest God nothing; therefore that mans end must needs be destruction that loves not God.

Fourthly, *that mans end must needs be destruction, that never gives over his sinne:* and so long as thy thoughts run after the world, thou canst never forsake sin: thou mayst resolve and think on the contrary, yet so long as thy thoughts run habitually on the things of the world, thou dost not forsake sin. Wicked and carnal men may have the eyes of their consciences opened; and their hearts awakened, whereby they may see their sins, and the hellish evill and danger of them: whereupon they may resolve and purpose to forsake them, and then they will make a covenant with God that they will not do thus and thus; I have been touchy and cholerick, but I will be so no more; I have been a prophane sweager, and blaiphemer of the name of God, but I will be so no more; I have been a drunkard, and an unclean person, but Lord thou shalt see a reformation in me. Nay it may be he will tell his Minister of it, and his father and his mother, his

his wife, his children, and all his friends too of it: but when he comes to his cold blood again, and these cold graces which flattered so, come to be cold in him, so that his heart comes to it self again, then vaine thoughts rest in his heart, and he returns to his old sins again, as the dog to his vomit, and the sow being washed, to the wallowing in the mire.

The Apostle excellently describes a man that can never depart from his sins: *They have eyes full of adultery, which cannot cease from sin: 2. Pet. 2. 14.* where the Apostle speaks not only of that adulterie which is a breach of the seventh Commandement: but of such an adulterie which is a perfect breach of *every* Commandement, when the heart runneth a whoring after every sin and vanitie: when the eye of the soul is full of adulterie, the heart cannot cease from sin; when the eye cannot see an object of gain or profit, but the mind is presently engaged and runs after it, when it cannot see an object of delight & pleasure, but it is straightway caught by it: when he cannot see any wrong or injury done unto him, but presently he is inflamed with revenge, and his heart runs after it: I say that if thy eye be thus full of adulterie, that thou canst not see the occasions, and hints of sin, but presently thou art insnared; & thy soul is taken by it; thou art the man that canst not cease to sin: therefore untill thou turn the eye of thy soul, which is the thoughts and affections of thy heart, another way, thou wilt never cease to sin. For wherefo-

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ever thou lookest, thou wilt be insnared, so long as thy thoughts are evill and vitious; either upon pride, or covetousnesse, or ambition, or envy, or delights; thy soul will look asquint on God: and untill these vain thoughts of thine be crucified, thou wilt only look upon the satisfying of these vain lusts of thine.

Prov. 3. 6. In all thy ways acknowledge God, and he shall direct thy paths. In all thy waies think on God, or else thou maiest go to many duties in Religion, but never be direct in thy going; thou maiest pray a thousand times, but never be established in thy prayer: thou mayest go from Lecture to Lecture, & yet never be established in thy service: thou mayest go about many things, and never be established in any thing, unlesse God be in all thy thoughts: a man may go on in a course of Religion, but it is a hap-hazard he is inconstant, and unsteady in his course, unlesse in his heart he think upon God, and therefore his end must needs be destruction.

This then may serve, first, for *humiliation* to the godly: secondly, for *matter of condemnation* to the wicked.

v/c 1.

First for *humiliation*; are vain thoughts thus damnable, that when they bear sway in the heart, they make that mans end to be destruction? How then ought this to fill the faces of them that have the Spirit of Christ, with shame and confusion, and to make them in a holy manner to be confounded in themselves, and to think of the emptinesse, naughtinesse, and vanities

ties of their hearts? Beloved, thou canst not go to prayers, but abundance of vain thoughts will be about thee, like wasps to assault thee; thou canst not goe to the Word, but these vain thoughts will be a humming in thy ears; thou canst not go about the works of thy calling; but vain thoughts will haunt thee, and creep into thy meditations, and take away the main burthen of the work all the day long. Beloved, this should make a godly man ashamed, and confounded in himself, in the consideration hereof. The Prophet *David* was so confounded and ashamed hereat, that had not God poured in mercy and comfort into his soul, he had been distracted, and should have despaired, considering the company of vain thoughts that lodged within him, *Psal.* 94. 19. where he shews what abundance of distracting thoughts he had; that if God had not sustained him with comfort after comfort, he had even been overwhelmed in despair by them.

Augustine saith, a mans thoughts are not in his own power: the heart of man is like tinder; and if the Devill cast a spark into it, thou canst not hinder it from taking fire; but thou mayest hinder it from burning further. A ship may have leakes in her, and thou canst not hinder the coming in of water into her; but by thy pumping and industry thou mayest save her from drowning in the water; even so evil thoughts, though they be rooted out, yet they will come in again; a mans heart is like to the fig-tree that grew out of the stone wall, which *Epiphanius* speaketh

speakes of; the branches were lopt off, and it grew again; the boughs were lopt off, and it grew again; they cut down the body of it, yet it grew again; they pluckt up the roots of it, yet it grew again: til at last the stone wall and all was faine to be pulled down: Even so it is with vain thoughts in the heart; a man may lop them off by *godly sorrow*; he may cut them down, and root them up by *mortification*, and yet they will be sprouting up, and rising up again; till the whole body of sin be pulled down, and destroyed in a man. *Gregory* speaks of them, and saith; man may pluck them up, but yet not so, but that they will rise again.

The consideration hereof should humble us, & make us low in our own eyes. Oh then think with thy self and say. Oh that my thoughts should be so base, earthly and vain! what have I not a God, a Christ, a heaven to think upon? have I not excellent Commandements of my God, and thousands of sweet and precious promises in Scripture to think upon? and must I be thinking on every bable? of every straw, not worth the thinking on? Take the Apostles exhortation, *Whatsoever things be true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, if there be any praise think on these things.* Ph. 4. 8. what are there so many vertuous things; so many holy & pure things; so many admirable and glorious things; so many heavenly graces, and divine promises;

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so many blessed passages of holy Writ to take up my mind? & shall I spend my thoughts and time upon such vaine and cursed things as will yeeld me no profit? this should astonish the hearts of Gods people, and greatly humble their souls.

The second use may serve for *matter of condemnation* unto the wicked: let this doctrine strike terror into the hearts of those men, that suffer their hearts to be taken up with vaine thoughts; as *Peter* said unto *Simon Magus*, so let me say unto them, *Repent of this thy wickednesse, and pray unto God (verse 8); that if it be possible, the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee.* The Apostle doth not only wish him to repent of his simony and bribery, but also of the least vaine thoughts of his heart: pray unto God, if perhaps the very thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee: for, beloved, the very least vaine thoughts that thou thinkest, without repentance are impardonable: there is an impossibility of remission of vaine and idle thoughts without true repentance.

Oh what fearful news is this to the world of men that lay not this to heart! Beloved, may we not run into the ears & hearts of all earthly men with this point, whose minds and thoughts are earthly? Is it so that he whose thoughts run *habitually* on the world, his end is destruction? Then they that make *no conscience* what their thoughts are, what their imaginations are, what they think of as they go up and down, how can
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such escape the vengeance of hell? Tell me then what thy thoughts are; are they not of thy hawks & hounds, of thy cattel and grounds, of thy gardens and orchards, rather than of Christ? When thou walkest in the streets, whereon run thy thoughts, but on thy pleasures, and profits; and earthly delights? yea of every vaniey, and every delight, canst thou think, rather than of God and his Commandements. Thou comest to Church, thou prayest, and hearest the Word of God; but do not vain thoughts come along with thee? thou goest home again, but do not vain thoughts haunt and dog thee?

It is the brand of a wicked man, *not to have God in all his thoughts*, Psal. 4. 10. when goods and cattel, plough and cart, pleasures and outward contentments are in his mind & thoughts; when ruffs and cuffs, houses and dishes, tables and fair hangings, or any thing but God can take up their thoughts; they can have thoughts of every thing, but of God they can think none; this is the brand of a wicked man, that he hath no blood of a Christian in him.

It is a true description of a Pagan and Infidel, that hath no knowledge of Christ, *to be vain in his imaginations*: Rom. 1. 21. *When they knew God, they glorified him not as God; but became vain in their imaginations*: vain in their disputes, vain in their reasonings, vain in their thoughts, in their carriages and disputations; so then though thou knowest God, and hast things enough in thy mind, that convince thee that
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this God to be worshipped; and understandest the worship of God, and the commandements of Christ: yet if thou glorifiest him not as God, giving thy heart and affections to him, but art vaine in thy imaginations, thou dishonourest God. Hear what God saith unto such, *All the day long have I stretched out my hand unto a rebellious and gain-saying people, which walk in a way that is not good, but after their own thoughts, a people that provoke me continually to my face,* Isa. 65. 2, 3. As if God had said, I sent Prophet after Prophet, Minister after Minister, to instruct them in the knowledge of my wayes, I laboured to convert them, and to bring them home unto my self, and to work better thoughts in them; but still they are a people that *walk after their own thoughts, that provoke me continually unto my face.* There is never a thought of thine, but it is in the very face of God, both thought and imagined.

But some man may say, I think of God, and of Christ, of faith, and repentance, and of calling on God, of mending of this and that course; I think of death, and of my last account, and every foot I have holy thoughts in my mind.

But beloved give me leave, I pray you, to speak something unto you, which, it may be, may stick upon you while you live: I will propound these four things and distinctions unto you, which I will use.

First, *What? dost thou think of God and of heaven? then tell me whether thy thoughts be injected thoughts into thy heart, or thoughts*
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raised by the heart; for there is a great deal of difference between thoughts *injected* and thoughts *raised*: God casts good thoughts into a godly mans heart, which being fit soyl it fructifies, and brings forth fruit. Again, God casts good thoughts into a wicked mans heart, but because his heart is not sanctified, and therefore no fit soyl to harbour in, they dye & vanish: God casts in, & they cast out; God casts in again, and they cast out again; therefore if thou hast good thoughts, examine and try whether they be thoughts raised from the heart or no; see whether thy heart be a *renewed* heart, a sanctified, an holy heart, fit to bring forth good thoughts every day. Beloved, a wicked man may have a thousand good thoughts, and yet go to hell in the midst of them all. God cast a good thought into the heart of the King of *Assiria* to go against *Judah* and *Jerusalem* to punish his people for their sins, and to avenge himself on them for the breach of this Covenant: but what saith the text? *Howbeit he thought not so.* Isa. 10. No, his only aym was how to get honor, how to enrich, to enlarge his territories, and to bring down the Nations under him, and to make his name and fame to be spread, and declared through all the world. So God casts many good thoughts, into many a wicked mans heart to repent, and to leave his drunkenness, his pride, his swearing and whoring, to be holy and religious: howbeit he thinks not so, but he thinks how to eat and drink, how to be proud and haughty; how to
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be rich and great in the world; how to be vaine and licentious, yea his thoughts are vile and vaine all the day long.

Oh that men were wise, *truly* to understand this! the want whereof is the cause why many thousands go to hell and are damned for ever. I will make it plain to you: a wicked man reasons thus with himself; I confesse, and it is true I sinne every day against God, and sometimes drink a pot with my friend, though sometimes I let fall an oath, and am overtaken with my infirmities, yet I thank God, he hath sanctified my heart; For I think of God and of Christ, and I oft call upon his name, and let my thoughts run on good things; God and heaven are many times in my mind, and I am sorry when I doe amisse, and the Lord hath blest me with a large portion of outward things. Besides, I see these and these signes of grace in me, and therefore I think my case to be happy. And thus securely they live, and so they go on, and so they dye, and so go to hell and perish for ever and ever. Here is the misery of it, many think of God, and of Christ, of death, and of their last account of heaven, of hell, of faith and repentance, of leaving sinne, of crucifying their lusts, and practising of holynesse. Now men think that their thinking of these things, is a part of their discharge, when indeed they are Additions to, and pieces of their talents, which increase their judgments. God casts in a thought of repentance, holynesse, of the remembrance of death, and last account:

Dost thou find thy heart never the better, & holier by them? Then know, it is only Gods haunting of thy heart, and Gods calling upon thee, and Gods inviting thee unto repentance, to leave thy finnes, to come out of thy deadnesse and formality, to prepare for thy death and judgment; & therefore I say, if thy heart now think not so, if thy heart do not repent, beleieve, and grow more zealous, and thou art not drawn the neerer to God; I say then, that the more of these good thoughts that thou hast had, the greater thy doom will be: if thou hast had ten thousands of them, if they have been only Gods haunting of thy heart, think thou then now of grace, of God, of thy poor soul, which is not bettered by them, nor made holy, then know they are pieces of thy talent, and it doth make thy torments in hell the greater.

2. Secondly, *thou hast good thoughts, but the question is, whether they be fleeting or abyding thoughts:* Many think of God, of grace, of heaven, of the word of God, and when they hear a Sermon, they will think of God; but these thoughts, though they come into their minds, yet they go away presently, they are in and out at an instant, in a trice, they passe away and are gone. Beloved, there are two kinds of vain thoughts, 1. vain, because the *substance and matter* of them is vain, and so all worldly thoughts are vain: 2. or else for their *want of assurance and lasting*, and so are all thoughts of heaven, of God, & grace, and of Christ, if they vanish away, they

they are all vain thoughts, though they seem otherwise, Hear what God saith *Gen. 6. 5.* *God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and all the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually.* [all the imaginations] great is the emphasis of this word [all] all the thoughts: yea all universally, are only evil continually.

But you will say unto me, Doth not a wicked man think that there is a God? why, that is a good thought; doth not he think that this God is to be observed and worshipped? why, this is a good thought; doth he not think that sin is to be forsaken? that is a good thought; doth he not think of heaven, and of Christ? how then are their thoughts *only evil* and that *continually*?

I answer, because all the thoughts of a wicked mans heart are vain, that is, vanishing thoughts; not vain for the *matter*, which sometimes may be good and holy, but vain because *they soon vanish away*; thoughts that come and tarry not, that leave no impression in their hearts behind them, these are all vain thoughts, according to that of the Apostle, *The Lord knoweth his thoughts of the wise, that they are vain*: *I Cor. 3. 20.* Beloved, in a godly mans heart, when a good thought comes, it abides & dwells a good while in him; and when it goes away it leaves a good impression behind it, it leaves a sweet smell and savour in the heart after it is gone, it is made more holy and sanctified by it. When a good thought comes into a godly mans heart,

it leaves the print of it behind : when a wicked man hath a good thought , he cosseth it up and down , and suffers it not to stay, but presently puts it away : let a thought of the world come in , and he can give it entertainment for seven days, yea for seven years, yea all his life he sets his heart as a wide gate open to receive them , and to entertain them: but if a thought of God, or of repentance , of holinesse and salvation come into his mind, he is tyred out with it , and it soon vanisheth away; therefore so long as thy thoughts are thus vain, though for the matter good, if thou hast never so many of them, yet if they *abide not*, but thou thinkest and unthinkest them again ; if they come and give thy Soul a jog, and so away ; the more I say thou hast of them, though thou hast many millions, the greater will be thy doom at the last day.

Thirdly, *Thou thinkest of God, but the question is, whether thy good thoughts be studied, or accidental thoughts.* A wicked man that runs gadding in his thoughts here and there, over the whole world, upon this and that, and I know not what, in the midst of a lottery of thoughts he cannot chuse but stumble upon some good : he thinks on God, he thinks on Christ, he thinks on Heaven; but it is by the by gone, these thoughts of his are not *natural*; but if he think of the world, of his pleasures, of his outward delights and contentments, these thoughts arise naturally out of his heart, they are his own. Now if may be a thought of God comes by the way; But

a godly man not only thinks of God, but he studies how to think of God; it is his continual endeavour to bring his mind to be fixed upon God; it is his whole care to have good thoughts to dwell habitually in him. There is an excellent phrase used to set it forth, *Malac. 2. 16. They that feared the Lord spake one unto another, and the Lord hearkned and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him of all them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his Name.* Where I pray you to mark, that *thinking upon Gods Name*, and *the fear of God* are joyned together: for thinking on God, comes from the fear of God; a godly man thinks upon God and fears him; he thinks that God is alwayes with him in every place, and he trembles before him: he thinks God beholds all his thoughts and affections, and he trembles at him: he thinks as he walks up and down in his way, as he is employed in his calling, as he is performing of any duty of Religion, that Gods eye is upon him and beholds him: and therefore he fears to offend and displease him. A wicked man will swear and blaspheme the name of God, and by and by it may be he will cry God mercy, and so he thinks of God. The man breaks out it may be into wrath and malice, fury and passion; and then it may be a thought will come into his mind to cry God mercy for it, and thus he thinks of God. The man is carelesse, earthly, dead, and luke-warm in the performance of good duties; and because his Conscience tells him

it is not good, he will ask God forgivenesse: he will be proud, vain and rotten in his speeches, and then it may be a thought will come into his mind to ask God forgivenesse, and so he thinks of God; he will think of the world, of his pleasures, profits, and of his lusts and sins, and then it may be a good thought will come into his mind, and then it may be he will think a little of God too. Beloved, this is carnal & devillish thinking of God; thy thoughts then of God must be joyned with the fear of God.

Fourthly and lastly, *thou thinkest of God, but the question is, whether thy thoughts of him be profitable or unprofitable thoughts*: a godly man thinks of repentance, and repents upon it; he thinks of calling on God more faithfully and fervently then he did before, and he *accomplishes* his thoughts: for he goes about it, and his heart is the better for it. Thus it was with David when he said, *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies*, Psalm 119 59. *I thought on my wayes* (there was his good thoughts) and *turned my feet unto thy testimonies* (there was the profit of his good thoughts:) But on the contrary, thou thinkest on God, but God hath never the more service of thee; thou thinkest of leaving of thy good fellowship, and merry companions, but for all thy thought, thou retainest them still: thou thinkest to give over all thy deadnesse and lukewarmnesse, and so get more zeal and fervency: yet day after day, and year after year, thy heart is as dead, vain and

and secure as before, as ever before. Examine thy self and see, thou hast good thoughts (thou saist) but where is the profit of them? thou thinkest of leaving thy wrath, and of bridling thy filthy passions but art thou enabled by thy thoughts to put up an injury the better? it may be thou thinkest of death; but is thy life the more *holy* and *sanctified* by it? Thou thinkest of Christ and his blood; but is thy heart purged by it? Oh the wretched misery of the most men in the world, because of the unprofitableness of their thoughts! they have many good thoughts, but they want the profitable use of them, they get no good by them.

There is an excellent description of the thoughts of wicked men (though it be Apocrypha,) *The heart of the foolish is like a Cart Wheel, and his thoughts like the rowling Axeltree.* As the Cart wheel goes round all the day, and yet remains on the Axeltree; so is it with wicked men, their thoughts wheel & wheel them up & down a thousand thousand times, their thoughts run upon this thing, and then upon another thing, and so they rowl up and down continually, yet their heart is at the same passe it was still; an *earthly* heart it was, & so it is still, a *prophane* heart it was, and so it is still; a *carnal* proud heart it was, and so it remains still; But let these know, that the time hastens wherein God will judge them, even for their very thoughts.

Where are they then that say *thought is free*? It is true indeed, *it is free from mens knowledge,*
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and from mens Courts, but not from Gods; they are not free from Gods all-seeing eye, and knowledge. Thou hast tryed and known me (saith the Prophet) thou understandest my thoughts afar off, Psal. 139. Beloved, as you are in the Ale-house, or gaming house, as you walk abroad in the fields, as you are imployed in your Callings, or about any holy duty, God seeth al thy thoughts, what is going in, and what is coming out: there is never a thought in thy heart, but God sees it; how, then, can thoughts be free? God will weigh the thoughts of men, Prov. 16. 2.

Beloved, what a fearfull day will that be, when God shall take his Scales and weigh (no mans bodies and estates, for then it may be that rich men, and fat, and grosse men will out-weigh them that are better:) but he will take mens thoughts and weigh them, he will weigh their souls: he will take mens good thoughts, and put them into one scale, and their bad, earthly, carnal and unprofitable thoughts, into another scale, and to try which weighs heaviest: Now if thy earthly and sinfull thoughts weigh heaviest, then down thou goest into eternal damnation.

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Secondly, *as thoughts are not free from Gods knowledge, so are they not free from Gods Word; for Gods Word can meet with them; for it is lively and mighty in operation, and is a discerner of the thoughtt and intents of the heart, Heb. 4. 12. Doth the word of God discern the thoughts of mens hearts? Then much more doth the God of*

of this word, and therefore how can thoughts be free?

Thirdly and lastly, *they are not free from the condemnation of hell and damnation. I am he (saith God) that searcheth the heart and reins, and I will give to every one of you according to his works; or as some translations have it, according to your thoughts: Rev. 3. 23.* Now if God will so severely punish thoughts, take heed then, how thou retainest any evil thoughts,

I should here give you some *meanes* in the use, that so you might rid your selves from vain thoughts.

First, *love the word of God*, if ever thou wilt come out of them; prize the truth of God, and labour to get thy mind and thoughts to be set on better things; and then the thoughts of the world, and all vain things will vanish away. This course the Prophet David took, *Psal. 119: 113. I hate vain thoughts, but thy Law do I love.* How came it to pass that he *hated vain thoughts?* namely, by *loving Gods Law*: if he had not *loved Gods Law*, and those excellent things therein, and set his heart on them; he could never have *hated* vain thoughts: The way, then, to break off thy league with vain thoughts, is to be in league with good thoughts. Dost thou complain of vain thoughts in prayer, in hearing the word, in receiving of the Sacraments, and art thou stuffed and filled with them, that thou canst not think upon God and holy things? thou dost hereby bewray thine own rottenness and

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corruptions. And therefore know, that if thou lovest the Lord and his Word, and didst set thy thoughts upon him, thou wouldest never have them so much imployed about such base things.

Secondly, if ever thou wouldest rid thy heart of vain thoughts, especially when thou art in holy action, *thou must goe unto God by prayer*; there is no greater bridle to restrain a man from vain thoughts, than this consideration, that he is to *goe to God*. I speak not this to the men of this world: *Carnal* men, who can rush into Gods presence hand over head, without any fear or reverence, they can set upon any duty without any preparation: but I speak it to the godly man, whose heart dreads and stands in awe of God: Wilt thou let thy mind rove and run all the day on worldly things? how then wilt thou call upon God? Dost thou not know that this is the cause of thy dulnesse, thy deadnesse, and wandrings of thy heart, when thou art about any good duty? namely, because thou sufferest thy heart to be lashing out, and roving abroad on the world all day, no marvell if it keep his haunt at night, & therefore thy heart being vain, God will never hear thy Prayer, *Iob 35. 13. God will never hear vanity*. Comest thou to God with a vain prayer? God will never hear it. Comest thou wit a vain ear to the hearing of the Word? God will never hear it; or with a vain heart to the Sacrament? God will not regard it. Lay this seriously to thy heart, if ever thou
wouldest

wouldest have thy heart to the duty thou art about, busie thy mind upon good things; for if thy heart be accustomed to vain and wordly things all the day, it is no marvell if it return to its haunt again at night:

Thirdly, consider that you have not *so learned Christ*. It is the Apostles argument, *Ehepf. 3.* consider then what you have learned of Christ; hath Christ taught you so? hath Christ taught you such a love, & given you such a liberty, that you should love the world more than him, and imploy and bestow all your thoughts wholly in seeking after vain things? Hath Christ taught you such a faith as this? Hath Christ taught you such a repentance as this, to have your thoughts more upon the world than upon Christ? to repent of sin, and yet never *forsake sinne*? Have ye so learned Christ? Hath he not taught you such a faith as purifyeth the heart? such a sanctification as cleanseth the soul and the mind? such an obedience as bringeth every thought into subjection unto himself? Therefore, if now thou shouldest still retain thy vain, dead, earthly and carnall thoughts, it is not to learn Christ: Christ teacheth thee no such doctrine, nor giveth thee any such licentious liberty; but thou learnest of the Devill, and of thine own heart: for *all evill and vain thoughts* arise from these three heads.

First from the *variety and abundance of the thoughts of the world*, which our Saviour calls the *cares of the world*.

I.

Secondly

2.

Secondly, from *the fountain of corruption in mans heart*, the heart of man being always like a sink, naturally running with filthynesse, or like a living quickset, always bearing: so it is with the heart of man, always imagining vain thoughts.

3.

Thirdly, from *the damned malice of the Devil*, and his fearfull suggestions & temptations both within and without; the Devill is fitly called a *tempter and tryer*; for by his suggestions and temptations he seeks and tryes mens hearts; and thereby knowing to what they are most *inclined*, and which way they are soonest overcome, accordingly he fits his temptations to intrap them. Now these thoughts are infinitely variable, according to the *constitutions, place, quality, passions, affections, and conditions* of men: as of the poor man in his beggary, of the rich man in his abundance, of the Minister in his calling, of the Majestrate in his, and so of all other men. Now the whole world is not able to fill the heart; how then shall we number the thoughts of it? But for the better understanding, we will rank them into these four heads, to show how *thoughts become vain*.

1.

1. *Materially*, mens thoughts are vain, when the matter of them is vain.

2.

2. *Formally*, when though for the matter they are never so good, yet the *manner* of thinking them is evill.

3.

3. *Essentially*, when the man that thinks them is vain.

4. When it is a thought that might become the best Saint upon the earth, or a glorified Angel in heaven; yet *the drift of the soul being carnall and vain*, the soul thereby become vain also.

4.

First, then, *materiall* vain thoughts, are all *thoughts of the world*, of the works of thy calling, of thy recreations, eating, drinking, sleeping, thoughts of thy wife and children, and the like; they are vain thoughts, not sinfull necessarily, yet they may come to be sinfull five manner of ways.

I.

First, *when we think of them primarily*, that is, in the first place, when we think of them before we think of God. Tell me then, what are thy first thoughts in the *morning*? Hereby a man may know his thoughts whether they be good and evill. Consider, I say, what is that first presents it self unto thy thoughts: certainly, that which the heart is most haunted withall, and most taken up with, is most naturall unto it: If the heart be carnall and earthly, it wil have carnall & earthly thoughts; if it be a godly and gracious heart, it will labour to make God the first in his thoughts. I know the godly man fails in many things, and many unruly thoughts in him may *rebell*; but it is the very griet of his soul, and he will never rest nor be at quiet, till he hath got Balm from *Gilead*, strength from Christ for the *subduing* and crucifying of them, even of those vain and sinfull thoughts that stick closest unto their hearts, & are most prone unto them

Manner

I.

them naturally: so that it is the practice of a godly man first in the morning *to lift up his heart with his hand unto God*; & when he is up, his thoughts are wholly upon God. See this in David, who considering that the Lord was present every where, made this use of it, *When I awake I am present with thee*, Psal. 139. 18. His heart was lifted up to God, he did endeavour to shake hands with God (as it were) in his holy meditations, worshipping and adoring God with his first thoughts; he would be sure to give God the flower and Maiden-head of his first service and thoughts: as soon as ever he was awake, his heart was in heaven. This shews, that the thoughts of men that live in their sins, are damnable thoughts; Thou that art a drunkard, a swearer, a prophane person, a carnal worldling, that never hast repented, I tell thee, that the very thinking of thy meat and drink is damnable, the very thoughts of thy recreations and of thy sleep, are damnable thoughts: to think of the works of thy calling, yea of setting thy foot upon the ground, or of any thing that God hath commanded thee to doe, are all damnable thoughts. Why? Because thou givest not God thy first thoughts. Wilt thou think of thy belly and back, before thou thinkest of God, and how to be converted unto him? Wilt thou think of thy Markets and Faires, before thou thinkest of thy reconciliation with God? The first thing that every soul is bound to doe, is to get in with God: *First, seek the Kingdom of God* (saith

saith our Saviour) and the righteousness thereof, *Matth. 6. 35.* Where our Saviour doth not forbid our taking of thought for the things of this life, but that they should not be sought after in the first place ; so that our first thoughts and endeavours should be after the Kingdom of heaven. Therefore all thoughts whatsoever, which are conceived before a man be converted, and so thinks of God, are all damnable thoughts.

Secondly, all worldly thoughts are sinfull, *Manner*
when we think of them too usually (as *Chrysostome*
speaks) because we think of the universalitie
 of them. Beloved, it is lawfull to think of the
 world, and to think of our trade and imploy-
 ments, to think of our corn, of our cattel, fields,
 barnes, wives, children: For if God have com-
 manded or commended these things unto us, then
 surely he gives us leave to think on them, that so
 we may accomplish our businesse the better; but
 let us take heed they be not too usual with us :
 for we have souls as well as bodies, and there is a
 heavenly as well as an earthly businesse to think
 upon; thou art not to live here always, there-
 fore take heed that thy thoughts be not too usu-
 all and common upon the things of the World,
 let not earch and earthly things have too much
 of thy thoughts. As the Prophet *David* seeing
 the thoughts of wicked men wholly to run af-
 ter the things of the world, he tels them, *all their*
thoughts perish ; and so I tell you, if that your
 thoughts on the world run together with heap
 K and

Manner

3

and crowd, and then you bundle them in bundles (as it were) they all prove damnable, and shall perishi.

Thirdly, worldly thoughts are finfull and damnable, *if thou thinkest of them too fauourily*: a carnal-minded man thinks fauourily of the things of the world, the thoughts of earthly things are savoury unto him: a wicked man will think of God and of the world; but which is the *sauouryest* thought to him? He will think of Christ, of Heaven, and of the Word of God, and of such a Sermon he heard, but alas, he finds no savour, tast, nor relish in them; he finds no sweetnesse, joy, or delight in them; but when he thinks of the world, of his gold and silver, of his lands and livings, Oh these are merry thoughts unto him, these are sweet unto him, and pleasant to him, & his heart is now at home in his own nest; He can think of these seven dayes, nay seven month, nay seven years together, and yet never be weary, but his thoughts as full and as fresh as at the first: But bring him to a Sermon, or to a Prayer, and he is jaded presently, his heart is empty, and his thoughts are at an end. For (saith the Apostle) *they that are after the flesh favour the things of the flesh*. Rom. 8.5. It is a true note of an earthly, carnal, fleshly heart, to be thinking on earthly and vain things fauourily: Thou mayst think on the world, but it must be only with a *cast of thy thoughts*, as one that looks upon a thing with a squint eye; but when thou art to think on God, or on the things

of God; then thou must gather all thy thoughts and Affections; thou must lay all the powers of thy soul together, and thou must imploy them only to this work.

Fourthly, worldly thoughts become sinfull, when we think of them without counsel; then (saith Solomon) they come to nought; when a man considers not afore-hand what thoughts are necessary and needfull, and so restraines and keeps off all impertinent thoughts, then his thoughts will prove distrustfull, carking thoughts, caring for the morrow, contrary to the rule of Christ, *Math. 6. 33. Take no care for to morrow, let to morrow care for it self.* He doth not forbid here Christian provident thoughts; for, godly, honest, and sober thoughts, are fitting and necessary; but he seems hereby to cut off all distrustful, carking thoughts.

Manner
4.

Fifthly, worldly thoughts come to be sinfull, when they are thought needlessly: And here I will shew how far a man may think of the world; namely, so far as his necessary businesse requires. Suppose a mans businesse be upon merchandise, it is lawfull to think of it, and of his shop and wares; but if thou wouldest know how far; why, so far as it is for thy businesse; But if thou hast so many of them, that thy heart is taken up with them, and thy mind still on them, then they are sinfull thoughts. There is many a man that in following of his businesse bestowes more thoughts upon it than his businesse requires, he hath ten thousands of superfluous

Manner
5.

ous thoughts; but let such remember the exhortation of the Wise man, *establisb thy thoughts by counsell*; counsell will tell a man when he hath thought enough, and what thoughts are fit for his imployment. Not that any man can carry himself *alwayes* in that golden mediocrity or mean; but a Christians care must be dayly more and more to *pare off* all *superfluous* thoughts of earthly things.

- 2: Now we come to the second thing: 2. *Thoughts are vain formally; when though the matter of them be never so good, yet the manner of thinking them is evil.* It is possible that a wicked man goe to hell, though he performes the same things, for the *matter* of them, that a godly man doth; a godly man *comes to Church*, so doth a wicked man: a godly man *prayer in his family*, so doth a wicked man; a godly man *reads the Scriptures*, so doth a wicked man; a godly man *repeats Sermons*, and conferres of good things, so doth a wicked man. There is no work that comes to the *outward act*, that a godly man doth, but a wicked man may doe the same; here only is the difference, in the *manner* of working. I will set it out to you by a place of Scripture; *In a great house* (saith the Apostle) *there are not only vessels of gold, and of silver, but also of wood and of stone, some to honour, and some to dishonour*, 2 Tim. 2. 20. Mark how the Apostle here sets out the reprobate and the elect, comparing them to vessels of honour, and dishonour: the vessels of dishonour are of the same

matter

matter that the vessels of honour are of: suppose it be pewter, or silver, cast it into a honourable form, and it will be a vessel of honour; but cast it into a dishonourable form, and it will be a vessel of dishonour, for base and mean service; even so it is between a true Christian and a meer formal professor, the *matter* of their service is one and the same; suppose it be hearing the Word, or receiving of the Sacraments, prayer, or the like, the substance and action is the same; but take the same prayer, and let a godly man cast it in his form, and it is holy and prevailes with God: let a wicked man take the same prayer, & cast it into his dishonorable form, and it becomes sinfull, not regarded, and abominable in Gods eyes. For hearing of the Word of God, the godly man hears, and the wicked man hears; the *matter* in both is the same; the godly man he casteth the Word into a godly mould, he hears the word, and he trembles at it; he hears the Word, and beleeves it; he hears the Word, and his heart bowes to it, and resolves to practise it: a wicked man he hears the Word too, but he casteth it into a dishonourable mould, he hears it with deadnesse and dulnesse, without trembling, without faith and obedience. So a godly man may think thoughts of God, & so may a wicked man think thoughts of God, the *matter* of both is good; yet the thoughts of the wicked are vain, though he thinks of God, yet, because he casteth it into his dishonourable frame, he fears not God, his heart

K 3 trembles

tremble not at God, but his heart is as full of dead earthly affections as before; he thinks of hearing the Word, but it is after his own fashion, he thinks of praying, but he prays with his own spirit, and not with the spirit of Adoption.

The Psalmist tells us, that the whoremaster, the drunkard, and the thief, thinks of God, but it is after his own fashion: *Psal. 50. 21. These things hast thou done (saith God) and I held my tongue, and thou thoughtest that I was even such a one as thy self.* A wicked man goes on in his sins, and thinks that they are not so devillish and abominable, as some say they are, and he thinks that God thinks so too; he is earthly, carnall, luke-warm, and dead-hearted, and if he repent at the last, he thinks all will be well, and he thinks God is of the same mind too; he goes on in his drunkenness, swearing, pride, and hypocrisie, and he thinks if he do but remember to ask God mercy, and to cry, Lord receive my soul, when he is going out of the world, he thinks he shall not go to hel, but be carried to the joys of heaven, and he thinks God is of his mind, that God thinks so too: But mark what the Lord saith, *I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thee. Ob consider this you that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.*

3.

Thirdly, mens thoughts are vain, when the heart that thinks upon them is earthly and vain; wherefore if all the wicked men in the world should

should lay their heads together to think a good thought, yet they cannot: for their hearts are vain hearts, sinfull hearts, they may think of excellent propositions concerning God; his worship, his word, and service; but so long as the heart that thinks upon them is carnall and vain, they cannot speak that which is good, as saith our Saviour: *Matthew 12. 34. How can you speak good things?* Why, may some men say? *may not a wicked man read a Chapter in a Bible, are the words so hard to be understood, and pronounced? cannot a wicked man take a Sermon and read it and hear a Sermon and repeat it, what? are Letters and syllables so hard to be pronounced?*

Object.

I answer, (beloved) that is not the meaning of our Saviour, [*How can yee that are evill speak good things*]: no, no, a wicked man may read Gods word, and propound good questions as well as a true Christian; but he cannot speak good words, that is, he cannot speak them from a good heart; and therefore his heart being carnall and vain, good words in his mouth are as a Jewell in a swines snout: It is a word indeed, but not a speech, when he reads or pronounceth Gods word. *Aristotle* saith, that speech is nothing but the expression of that that is within the heart. Now then, if the word and truth of God be not ingrafted in thy heart, if thy heart be not heavenly when thou speakest of heavenly things, thou dost pronounce them, but not speak them. But when thou speakest of earthly

Ans^r.

things; then thou speakest to the purpose; because thy heart is set upon them, and thy mind and thy tongue go together, there is no jarre nor discord betwixt them: but if thy heart be not pure, though thou speakest good things, or holy things, yet in Christs sense thou speakest the not: For (say I) how can a vain, evill, corrupt heart think good thoughts? *An evill tree cannot bring forth good fruit,* (saith our Saviour) he doth not say, that an evill tree cannot be made good, for it may be grafted into another stock; divers ways there are to make it good: but so long as it is a corrupt tree, it cannot bring forth good fruit; *Do men gather grapes of thornes, or figgs of thistles?* Dost thou go to a drunkard, and thinkest there to find any religion in him? or to a whore-master to find grace in him? Dost thou go to a swearer or a prophane person, and thinkest thou to find any fear of God in them? Indeed sometimes there may be some morall good found in them, but they are as a pearl in a dung-hill, out of its place.

Fourthly, *all mens thoughts come to be vain when the drift and end of the heart & soul in thinking of them is vain.*

But thou wilt say unto me, *the end of my good thoughts is Gods glory. What? is it not to Gods glory that we go to the Word and Sacrament, that we pray and give almes?*

I answer, the end of every good work in it self is Gods glory; but is it the end of the Worker, speaker, or thinker? I make no question

question but the end of a good action in it self is the glory of God; so, the end of prayer is the glory of God, the end of all preaching and Sermons is, the glory of God, the end of giving of almes, and of all good thoughts, is the glory of God, but the end of the man that prayes and preaches, what is that? the end of the hearer and giver of almes, what is that? the end of him that speaks well, what is that? Beloved, most men have false and corrupt ends, which we will branch out into these three heads.

For the first, *men will be thinking and plodding from morning till night of their worldly busineses: Now because they know they must think on God, to make God amends, perhaps they will think on him at night, when they have dishonored him all the day.* So men will swear and swagger, drink and be drunk, and when they have done, say, Lord have mercy upon me, and so they think to make God amends. What (beloved) will yee swear, swagger, drink, be drunk, and lye, be secure and worldly, and then ask God forgiveness to make him amends? This is to break *Priscians* head, that you may give him a plaister. Will you trespassse your neighbour, that you may ask him forgiveness? This is a damned and devillish religion; yet this is the religion of many men in the world, you shall have them keep daies and weeks and years in the observation of the times of Gods worship; they will keep the Sabbath in comming to Church, they will hear Sermons, pray and think of God
but:

but all this is to make God amends for the wrong that they have done him: they know they have offended God, and therefore they will doe something to make him amends: like those wicked men in *Jeremies* time, who did *steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after the Gods they knew not*, and then come and stand before God in his house, which is called by his name, and said, *We are delivered though we have done all these abominations.* As if God should say unto wicked men, What, will yee swear, steal, lye, and be earthly, giving up your selves unto all manner of lewdnesse, in the breach & contempt of my commandments, & then think by making a prayer unto me and by lifting up your eyes unto me, & by giving your ears to hear my word, thereby to make me recompence? No, no, *I have shewed thee, O man, what is good*, *Micah. 8.*


2 Secondly, the end of mens thoughts is commonly to collogue wit^h God. Let a man be under the crosse, in calamity, pain, and misery, then God will hear of him often, then he will think of God, and of his sinnes: Nay, the beastliest wretch in a whole Parish, upon his sick bed, then, Oh how will he call upon God, then send for the Minister, let him pray for me, read a chapter or some good booke; then God shall have service upon service, then he shall have the first, second, and third course. But all this is but to be raised up again; and then when he hath received a little strength, he falls off again: like the

the Jews, who when God flew them, they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God; new entelasse they did but dissemble with him with their mouths, & flatter him with their double hearts, Psal. 37. 34. There is many a man that seeks to God, yea, that seeks to him with tears, & performs many a goodd duty, and yet he doth but flatter with God, he doth it but to curry favour with him; he is afraid of sicknesse, crosses, plagues, and death, and curses upon him, if he should nor do so: and therefore to prevent this he will dissemble some service to God.

Thirdly, to smother and choak their own consciences; their hearts think and tell them, they must think of God, their consciences tell them, that they must have some holinesse, some religion, that they must keep the Sabbath in some sort, that they must pray and go to Church: and hence it is, that the drunkard, swearer, whoremaster, will sometimes have thoughts of God, and will be performing some outward acts of Religion, Why? his conscience otherwise would not let him be at rest, but is as the Devils ban-dog to drive him to it.

Thus when the Prophet commanded the people to worship the Lord; to reverence his name, to hallow his Sabbaths; their consciences told them that they must do so, or else all the threatenings of wrath, and vengeance denounced by the Prophets would come upon them, Hence it is that the Lord by his Prophet exhorts, saying, *Arise yee, and depart, for this is not your rest; your*
mind

mind hath another haunt, you have this and that black lust, this is not your rest. Doth thy heart rest on God & good things? If thy heart be good and holy, so that it takes up its rest in God, and in Christ, then it is well; but if thou only turnest aside to good duties, and fallest, as it were, by chance upon holy things, away, away (saith God) this is not your rest. *Aristotele* saith, that *the being of a thing consisteth in the end of a thing*. Therefore if the end of thy thoughts and courses be earthly and vain, then certainly thy religion is earthly and vain. Thou goest up and down; what is it that thou lookest after? Is it that thou mayst have grace, or that thou mayst follow thy calling, and get thy living? is it this that thou wouldest have, for which thou keepest such a digging and scraping, and such a laying up? Then thy end is carnal and vain, and thy drift and end declareth the truth of thy soul, that it is carnal and vain.



THE

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JUDGEMENT
OF THE
WORLD

By *SAINTS* at the
last day.

DELIVERED

And learnedly discovered in
a Sermon preached

By that Reverend and faithfull Mi-
nister of Gods VVord,

WILLIAM FENNER, B. D.

Sometimes Fellow of *Pembroke Hall*
in *Cambridge*, and late Pastor
of *Rochford* in *Essex*.



London, Printed by *F. L.* for *John Stafford*

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Successor, fellow of Merton Hall
in Cambridge, and late Pastor
of St. Andrew in London



London Printed by F. E. for John Sturges



A SERMON OF

Mr. WILLIAM FENNER'S

Upon this ensuing Text.

1 Cor. 6. part of the 2d. verse.

Know ye not that the Saints shall judge the world,

THE Corinthians, though Paul had converted many poor mean men amongst them, Chapter 1. 26, 27. God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty: yet the Nobles, the Lawyers, the Counsellors, the chief men in the City, the Apostle had not converted one of them, or at the least very few. Brethren, you see your calling, who they are that be converted to the obedience of the Gospel of Christ from the evill of their wayes: not many wise men after the flesh, not many rich

rich, not many noble, some few there be, here and there one; but for the most part they are a company of poor beggarly Christians: now (it seems) these poor Christians have controversies one with another, went to Law among themselves, and that before unbelievers. The Apostle condemns this their *going to Law*, and would have them cease their sutes and quarrels, one against another, before the unjust and unbelievers, and that by *four Arguments*.

1. First, *by the shamefullnesse of it*, verse 5. *I speak it to your shame*; as if he should say, Are you such fools, that you cannot take up these matters among your selves? that you cannot make references of your wrongs to mediate one to another, but that you must goe to Law before unbelievers?

2. Secondly, *from the scandalousnesse of it*. It is a thing so scandalous and offensive to those that are without, that I wonder any of you dare be so bold as to goe to Law one with another. What will the world think? What? Are *these* the men that professe the Gospel? Are these they that have the *Wisdom* of God in them, and that are led by the Spirit of God? And have *they* no more understanding in them, than when they have any matter of controversie, they cannot end it among themselves, but must goe to Law before *the unjust and unbelievers*? (as they term them.)

3. Thirdly, *from the unseemlinesse of it*, in the second verse. *Doe you not know that the Saints shall*

shall judge the earth? What? hath God made you Judges of the world, and do you go to be judged by the world? Or as *Ambrose* speaks, hath God appointed you to be Judges of the men in the world, and are you not fit to be Judges of the things of the world?

Fourthly, from the strangeness of it; Dare any of you? He speaks interrogatively (verse 1) It is a strange thing that you should com to that impudency against the Gospel of Christ; one would think that you would tremble and quake at such a thing as this is. What, is there never a wise Christian amongst you? never an understanding Professor that is able to take up a controverſie, or decide and judge between his brethren? what a strange thing is this? Then he backs it with four Arguments.

1. Because they were Brethren, verse 6 Brother go to Law with brother?

2. Because it was about the things of this life. What? hath God made you Judges of heavenly things, of Angels, and are you unfit to judge of the things of this life?

3. It was about small matters (verse 2.) where as you shall sit upon men and Angels, and the weightiest matters in the world, the greatest things of Gods law, judging them to the greatest penalty and punishment, even to eternall damnation. and are ye unworthy then to judge even of the smallest matters?

4. And lastly, Because it was about such things, as the meanest Christian in the town might have

4.

1.

2.

3.

4.

taken up, and have ended: Set up them that are least esteemed.

Do you not know that the Saints shall Iudge the world?

Dott.

I need not go far for a point, the word affords it; The Doctrine is, That the Saints shall judge the world,

It is an old truth, yea as old as the World it self: you may read it in the fourth verse of Iudas Epistle; That Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied; saying, Beho'd the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his Saints. God will not only come to judgement himself, but he will come attended with all his Saints, even with all the godly, to execute vengeance upon all the world. So our Saviour told Saint Peter, and not onely him, but all that follow him in the regeneration: They shall sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, Mat. 9. 18. They shall judge the Nations, & have dominion over the people, Wisd. 3. 8.

Object.

And now because doubt is the best way to attain unto knowledge, let me answer a doubt, that may creep in by the way, How shall the Saints judge the world?

Answer.

Ans. Not by pronouncing of judgement upon the world, for that Christ only shall doe; Then shall the King say to them on his left hand, Depart ye cur'd, Mat. 25. But the Saints shall judge the World these four ways:

I.

1. They shall judge the world, by their consent unto Christs judgement, God traines up his children in this world, and educates them, and teacheth them

them how they may judge the world hereafter; he teacheth them in this life how to assent with his proceedings in the world; to that they are able to say, *Righteous art thou O Lord, and just are thy judgements*, Psal, 119. 137. Now if the Saints be trained in *this life* to assent unto Gods proceedings with the world; much more then will they be able to know and consent unto Christs judgment, when he shall come with his Saints to judge the world: Now the Law saith, that *consenters are agents*: and therefore because the Saints shall consent to the judgement of Christ, therefore they are said to judge the world.

2. *The Saints shall judge the world by their applause of Christs judgement*: they shall not only give consent unto the judgement of Christ, but they shall also applaud it and commend it: when God shall say to all drunkards, swearers, lyers, Sabbath-breakers, and to all unbeleiving, impenitent and gracelesse sinners, *Depart ye cursed into hell fire*, then though it was his own father that begit him, or his mother that bare him, though it were his own brother or sister, wife or child, that hath been as dear as his own life & soul to him, yet they shall clap their hands for joy, and applaud the most righteous sentence of God upon them; and they shall sing *Hallelujah, salvation, and honour, and power, be to the Lord our God, for true and righteous are his judgments*. Rev. 19. 1, 2. Let them go accursed as they are; for it is a righteous sentence passed on them.

3.

3, *They shall Iudge the world by their Majesty;* they shall not only stand against the wicked, and consent to, and applaud that sentence that Christ shall passe against the wicked, but they shall be invested with robes of majesty, and with a diademe of glory: then shall the righteous shine as the stars in the firmament, and the wicked shall be amazed and astonished at the sight of them: as you may read in the platform of judgement, *Matth. 25.* where Christ sets his Saints over against the world, that so the world may look upon them, and be confounded at their sight.

4.

4. *They shall judge the world by their lives and conversation;* (as *Ambrose* saith rightly) then is the world judged by them, when as the courtes and manners of the world are not found upon them. Therefore it is a pretty observation of *Hilary* (if it be the meaning of the Text) (I will not say it is) upon the 2 *Pf.* *Be wise yee judges:* God hath appointed you to be Iudges, to sit on his bench with his Sonne; learn then to be wise, get to be indued with spirituall wisdom and understanding, and to shine in all integritie and righteousness; and then turning his speech to the wicked, he says, *Kisse the sonne lest he be angry.* However it be, yet this is a truth, that by the *lives* of his Saints, he will judge the world; their faith shall judge the worlds infidelity; their repentance shall judge the worlds impenitency; their accepting of, and taking the Lord Iesus, shall judge their rejection and neglect of Christ

Christ Iesus; their zeal shall judge the worlds luke-warmnesse, and their holinesse shall judge the worlds prophanenesse.

I: *Because of the mysticall union that is betwixt Christ and his Saints;* He is the head and they are his *members*; now that which the head doth, we ascribe it to the whole body; when the head speaks, the whole body speaks; when the head sees, the whole body sees: so when Christ judgeth the world, the whole body of Christ may truly be said to judge the world. *In as much as you did it unto one of these (saith Christ) you did it unto me:* so, in as much as Christ passeth sentence, even all the members of the mysticall body of Christ judge with him.

Reas. 1.

Secondly, *in regard of compassion:* I speak not of the word [*compassion*] as it signifies [*pity*] but of *compassion*, of *suffering with Christ*, seeing that Christ was reproached, contemned, hated, misused, and condemned by the world, the Saints are likewise with him; seeing *they* partake of the afflictions, humiliations, and debasements of Christ here, *they* shall also be made partakers with Christ in his glory. Here the wicked judge the Saints, and call them hypocrites, and dissemblers, and laugh and scoff at them, and wonder at them, as the Prophet brings in Christ speaking, *Esay 8 Behold, I and the children that thou hast given me, are for signs and wonders in Israel:* The wicked count them for wonders and monsters in the world, judging them hypocrites and liars, which have nothing in them but rotten-

Reas. 2.

nesse and dissimulation. Now the rule of like for like shall take place here, and as they were judged by the world, so they shall be Judges of the world.

Reas. 3. Thirdly, for great terror to all wicked men at the day of judgement : for as it is with a thief, not onely when the Judge shall command to hang him; but all the Justices, & all the Country shall cry out, Hang him, hang him; he is judged the more terribly; so God will not only say of all wicked and ungodly sinners, Damn them damn them, but he will have all the Saints in heaven, and all the Saints on earth to cry out, Away with them, away with them, let them be damned, *Psal. 50. 4, 5.* This will make their judgement so much the more terrible.

Fourthly, the Saints shall judge the world because God shall so convince them; that their mouth shall be stopped, they shall have never a syllable to excuse themselves with all, when they shall see men, flesh and bloud as themselves are, when they shall see men and women, that have lived in the same town, enjoyed the same Ordinances of God, lived in the same family; that did partake of the same blessings, & of the same crosses and afflictions with themselves, subject also to the same corruptions and sins as themselves, when they shall see these at Christs right hand, they shall have never a word to excuse themselves withall : as when the Apostles had healed the creeple (*Acts 3.*) if the people had judged them for wicked and pestilent men, the creeple

creeples would have convinced them, and shewed that they were of God; if they should have cryed, Root them up, the creeples would have condemned them, and told them, that they did good. And when the wicked shall see the Saints at Gods right hand, would they call them hypocrites and dissemblers? they themselves shall see, that they are sincere; wil they call them Puritans? why, they shall then see that their purity stands them in good stead: then *the ungodly shall not stand in judgement, nor the sinners in the Congregation of the righteous, Psal. 1. 6.* Thus the point is clear.

The first Use then is for *instruction*, whereby we may learn, that *the Saints by their now being Saints, doe now judge the world*: if by the lives of Saints then God doth judge the world, then there is never a Saint in a Town, or Citie, or Parish in all the Country, but he judgeth all the wicked that are about him: How? By living godly by hating the sinnes of the times, by keeping his or their garments clean from the pollution of the world: For by doing this, he judgeth the world. See it in *Noah, Heb. 11. 7. By faith Noah being warned of God, as yet moved with fear, prepared an Ark for the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world.*

But some men will say, *Could Noah be said to condemn the world by making the Ark?* all the world did not see him when he did it.

Beloved, *Noah was making the Ark an hundred and twenty years, though it was not seen of all,*

yet all the world must needs hear of it, it being such a strange thing. Now he *condemned the world* in that the whole world did not come unto *Noah* to enquire of him in sober sadness, but rather mockt him for building the Ark; they thought him to be a *peevish melancholy man*, and not well in his wits, and so scoft at him, saying, *Will he make an Ark to swim upon dry land?* whereas they should have ask'd him soberly the *cause why* he did it; and if they had done so, *Noah* no question would have told them, that the wrath of heaven was upon the World, and that the floods of Gods vengeance were shortly to be poured down upon us: and, *because my heart hath been naughty, and I have sinned and provoked the Lords wrath, I fear if I get not into this Ark which the Lord hath commanded me for to make, I shall perish* Now because they would not come unto *Noah* to ask him this reason, therefore the world was *condemned* by him: even so the Saints, by making an Ark for their poor souls, even by getting into Christ, (as the Ark was a type of Christ without whom none can be saved) the Saints, I say, by getting into Christ, doe judge the whole world, when they hear there be men that be no swearers, and no drunkards, and that there be men that will pray, read, hear the word, conferr of God and of Christ, and that weep and mourn for their sins, that spend their times in mortification of their lusts, and endeavour after holinesse and sanctification; the whole world, I say, is judged by them. How? why

why, they should say : Sirs, what is the matter that you do so run after Sermons ? that you keep such a stirr about getting faith and repentance, more than other men ? that you pray, weep, fast, and mourn, and are so strict in your works ? If thus men would but come unto Gods Saints, and ask them the reason of all these things, the Saints of God would tell them, that the wrath of God would come upon them, if they did not thus, they would never be saved ; if they did not thus beleeve, and thus repent, and thus pray, and walk thus holily and precisely, they should be all damned. But the world it fals a mocking and a scoffing at them, & never seeks to prevent the wrath of God, but it suddenly seisseth on them, to their destruction.

Secondly, this teacheth us, that *when there is one sinner converted from the wickedness of his ways, and is become a Saint, then all the world may know that there is a new judge come to sit upon them.* Seest thou a drunkard, a swearer, a prophane person converted from his sinnes, and now walks soberly, holily and purely ? seest thou a man and a woman struck at a Sermon ? Then know, that unlesse thou comest out of thy sinnes, unlesse thou doest repent, and walk holily, there is a new judge added to the rest, that shall judge thee. As our Saviour told the Pharisees, *If I through Beelzebub cast out Devils, by whom doe your children cast them out ? Therefore they shall be your judges,* Matthew 12. 27. where Christ tels them, that their children
who

who were his Disciples, (for some of the Pharisees children did beleve in Christ and follow him, and had power from Christ to do the same works that Christ did;) Now they liked it well enough in their own children, but they could not endure it in Christ: and therefore he tells them, that their children, whom God had converted, and to whom he had given power to do the same works that he did, even they shall be their Judges to condemn them: and even so may it be with thee, thou art a father or a mother, God having converted any of thine own children, that child shall be thy Iudge and condemn thee, if thou repent not. It may be God hath converted thy brother and sister, and thou art not converted; thy own brother and sister shall condemn thee, if thou do not repent and come out of thy sins.

3.

Thirdly, we may learn, that *it concerns all the world to take notice of every grace in Gods children*; There is never a grace of God in any of his Saints but it shall condemn the world if it be voyd of it. The wayes of the Lord are all judgements, because they judge them that will not walk in them. Every grace, yea the very thoughts of the righteous are called *Judgements* by Solomon, *Prov. 12.* You may know a crooked thing by laying it to a straight line, and by that it is judged to be crooked: so the thoughts of the righteous which are right, holy, and pure, shall judge the impure, unholy and crooked thoughts of wicked men. Is the child of God
humble

humble? His humility shall judge thy pride. Is the child of God meek and patient in suffering wrong and injuries? His meeknesse and patience shall judge thy choler and revenge. Hath the child of God faith given him to beleieve in the Lord Jesus? his faith shall judge thy infidelity. Hath the child of God the Spirit of prayer given him? it shall condemn thee that prayest only with thine own spirit. Hath he zeal? His zeale shall judge thy luke-warmnesse. Doth his speech and communication administer grace to the hearers? It shall condemn thee that speakest of vain and idle things. Yea, all the actions of the godly shall judge the wicked: and hence the Saints are said *to do Gods judgements*, Zeph. 2. 3. that is, they do according to Gods judgements whereby he will judge the world: Thus they that do mourn, do judge them that do not mourn; they that bewayl their wickednesse, and the sinnes of the times, judge them that doe not: they that fast, weep, pray, and humble themselves for the miseries of the Church in these dreadfull daies, they judge them that make no good conscience of their duties.

Fourthly, learn hence, that *all the texts of Scripture, all the whole word of God, that is it that begets these Saints, and therefore they must needs judge the world.* the word of God begets mens hearts unto sanctification and holinesse, whereby they become Saints: and therefore if they, then much more shall the word it self judge the world: and hence it is that *all the words*

words of God in the Scripture, are called *Judgements*, Psal. 105. 5. And our Saviour saith. *The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge you in the last day*, Iohn 12. 48. *The word that I have spoken*, where mark, he doth not say, *The word which you have heard*: No, there are many swearers, & drunkards, & prophane ungodly wretches, that will not come to Church to hear the word; there are many wicked men, & dead-hearted worldlings, and rotten livers, that will not be brought to hear Gods word: it may be at this present, there are many whore-mongers, drunkards, and wicked persons, that wallow in their filthinesse in the Ale-house, Game-house, or Drab-house; or in the fields, or beds, or at their sports. Well, this word that is now a preaching, whether they will hear it or no, shall judge them at the last day. Now all the wicked in *Abford*, that hear the word of God calling upon them to repent, and to come out of their finnes, but will not, or out of contempt of Gods word, will absent themselves from it; this word shall judge and condemn them. There is never a drunkard, swearer, or prophane person, though his pew be empty, but this word of God that denounceth the eternal wrath and vengeance of God upon them, if they come not out of their finnes, this word shall rise up in judgement against them, and condemn them eternally. Oh that they could but hear it! but the word that I have spoken shall judge you, whether you hear it or not.

Fifthly and lastly, hence it followes, that all the ministers of the word of God shall also judge the world. Son of man (saith God to the Prophet Ezekiel) wilt thou judge the bloody City? Yea, thou shalt shew her all her abominations, Ezeck. 22.2. as if he should have said, Sonne of man, they are drunkards, wilt thou not tell them of it? They are whoremasters, wilt thou not tell them of it? They are filthy idolaters, wilt thou not tell them of it? They live in their sinnes, and in their abominations, and wilt thou not tell them of it? Son of man, tel them of all their abominations, and tell them that they shall go to hell, if they repent not, tell them that they are damned men if they go on, and come not out of their sinnes: Wilt thou judge them (son of man?) Beloved, there is never a Minister in England, nor ever a Sermon that is preached by them, but it judgeth every Parish, and every man and woman in the congregation, that do not labour to do what is commanded them, and leave undone what is forbidden them: I say, it judgeth them, or else it is a judgement unto them.

This then serves to condemn three sorts of *vse 1.* men in the world: First, all those that despise the Saints, and that see not amiablenesse in their faces. All the Country doth reverence the face of the Iudge when he rides his circuit; Let the Iudge come into the Country, and all the Knights, Iustices, and Gentlemen in the Country will go out to meet him, and bow unto him; yet these Iudges are but Iudges of a few rogues, malefactors,

factors and peasants in the Country: Alas, they are far from the dignitie of the Saints? for the Saints shal judge Saints & Angels: All the world, Kings and Queens, Lords and Nobles, and Captains of the Earth, the poorest Saint in Christendome shall judge them. The Apostle, or rather, our Saviour saith, *to him that overcometh, & keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the Nations*, Rev. 2. 26. Whatsoever he be, if he do the works of Christ, and walk in the Ordinances of Christ, he shall have power over the Nations, not only to condemn their pomps and vanities, their lusts and corruptions, but also to *convince* their consciences, and to condemn their souls for ever.

2.

2. Shall the Saints judge the world? Then *what fools are the wicked that prepare not for these Judges?* When the Judge comes to an Assise, all men prepare for him; the Constables make ready their Presentments, the Juries are warned, and the Clerks make ready their Bills, &c. lest the Judge should clap a fine upon them: and shall the Saints be Judges. & dost thou not prepare thy heart by grace? Dost thou not get purity and holinesse against that day? Surely, if thou dost not, the very Saints will judge thee unmeet for heaven, and fit only to have thy portion in hell. When Christ said, *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my Throne*, Rev. 3. 21. He ads, *Let him that hath an ear, hear*: Will God make his Saints to judg the world? Then let all wicked men give ear & hear what

what God saith of his Church: *The Saints shall judge the world*: Therefore let all men take notice of it, and prepare themselves for their judgement.

Lastly, *It condemns all those that do not see glory & majesty in the faces of Gods Saints.* There is majesty in the face of a Judge; yea a man may discover in them a kind of sovereign majesty. Even so the Saints of God have a majesty in their courses, in their looks, in their thoughts, and in all their wayes; and in all these they shall judge and condemn the wicked. The wicked may give the Saints nick-names and scorn, flout, condemn, and deride them now in this life, but let me tell them, that how *lightly* soever they esteem of them, they shall be their *Judges*: They may cry out against the Saints, as, long since the wicked *Sodomites* did against good *Lot*, *Gen. 19. 9. This fellow (say they) will be our Judge*: Why, what had *Lot* done with them? Alas, he did nothing, but when they would have done that Sodomitish villany against the two Angels that came to him, *Lot* went to them and said, *I pray you my Brethren do not so wickedly.* So let the godly be in the company of wicked men, that abuse the good creatures of God; say, I pray you my brethren do not so wickedly, be not drunkards, be not swearers; brethren I pray you do not so vainly, nor so prophanelly use the name of God in your mouths; I pray you my brethren, do not prophane Gods Sabbaths; do not lye, do not cheat, nor cozen, if you do these and these

3.

these things, the *wrath of God* will plague us for it; Oh then presently they cry out, *Who made you our judges?* As once the Hebrews did of *Moses*, Acts 7. 39. Dost thou call Saints hypocrites and dissemblers, men that judge before the time? Thou fool, wert thou not, as good to suffer the Saints to judge thee now, whereby thou mayest see thy wretchednesse and misery, and by faith and speedy repentance prevent that doom, which otherwise they tell thee will come upon thee, as hereafter, when if thou hast not repented, thou shalt never escape that doom and vengeance, to which the Saints will Iudge thee? What, wilt thou not suffer them to call a drunkard, a drunkard? or an adulterer, an adulterer? a blasphemer, a blasphemer? a carnall man, a carnall man? or a worldly man, a worldly man?

It is a pretty observation out of *Cyprian*, that because Christ did reprove all sorts of religions, and spared none, he reprov'd the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Lawyers, the Souldiers, &c. and yet doth not reprove the Priests, because they were Iudges of the people, not because he durst not, but he would not: If thou revilest the Saints, thou revilest thā Iudges. Take heed then, how thou casts the *least* aspersiō upon the Saints; do not say, they are rash Iudges, uncharitable censurers, dissembling hypocrites; for they shall be your Iudges. O that the people would hearken & be admonished in time, to prevent this judgement. Our Saviour saith, that *this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men*
have

have it Ioh, 3. 19 But the children of God, whom God calls *the light of the world*, these lights are come into the world, and men love darkness more than the light. How can the wicked escape damnation, that have so many thousand Judges to condemn them? If the malefactor that is indicted for murder or felony, cannot escape condemnation, that hath but one Judge to sit upon him: thou that art a wicked man, living in thy sins without Christ, how canst thou escape, that hast so many millions of Saints to judge thee, yea from Adam the first, till the last Saint that shall be upon the earth? Surely the wicked shall never escape condemnation: for,

1. *God the Father*, who judgeth by way of *authority*, he will condemn thee; all judgement cometh originally from him; he that hath often commanded thee to repent, and come out of thy sinnes, he shall condemn thee, because thou hast not obeyed him.

1.

2. *God the Sonne*, he will judge thee, who judgeth by way of *dispensation*. Acts 10. First, Christ preacheth to thee repentance and remission of sinnes, to which if thou yeeld not, then know, that there is a day appointed, wherein he will judge thee. That Saviour that thou layest thou desirest, if thou part not with thy lusts, he himself will be thy Judge that will condemn thee.

2.

3. *God the holy Ghost* will judge thee; that Spirit that now strives and wrestles with thee, that suggests good motions into thy heart, that

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puts

pates thee in mind of repentance, bidding thee leave and forsake thy sinnes, and live holily, but if thou wilt not, this Spirit shall judge thee by way of conviction.

4 The Word of God shall judge thee, and that by way of form, it being the platform, according unto which Christ will judge the whole world. Now suppose there be forty prisoners in the Gaol together, one in for murther, another in for theft, another for treason, (that man that knows the Law, if there be equity and justice in the Assise) he, I say that knows the Law, knows who shall be hanged, or quartered; or burned, or set free; even so, Beloved, that man that looks through the Scriptures, that reads this or that Chapter, this or that sentence, may know that or this man will to hell, if he repent not? Say I this of my self? or says not the Scripture as much? *The fearefull, and unbeleeving, & all that love and make lies, shall be cast into that lake that burneth with fire & brimstone for ever, Rev. 12. 8.* By this text the Lord Iesus will come and judge the world: and therefore for all such as live and dye in their sinnes, we may all know, that they shall be all damn'd in fire and brimstone for ever. Hereby I know that all they that make no conscience of idle, vain and earthly speeches, and reprobachfull words, they shall give an account for them by this Text, *Mat. 12. 56.* Doth the Scripture say, that *all the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the Nations that forget God?* I know it shall be so by the text, *Pf. 10.* for all things

things shall be done according to the Scriptures,
*Rom. 2. 16. In that day (saith the Apostle) when
 God shall judge the secrets of mens hearts by Iesus
 Christ according to my Gospel; that is, just as Gods
 Ministers preach, just as you find it written
 in the same Scriptures, so will he judge at that
 day.*

Beloved, there is never a Text throughout
 the whole Scripture, that commands you to
 leave and forsake you sinnes, but it shall judge
 you, if you doe not: there is not one Text of
 Scripture, that commands performance of any
 holy duty, but it shall rise up in judgement a-
 gainst thee, if thou perform it not. Doth the
 Scripture say, *Be not drunk with wine wherein is
 excess* ? *Eph. 5. 18.* It shall judge and condemn
 the drunkard that drinks excessively. Doth the
 Scripture say, *Mortifie the members which are
 upon the earth, fornication, uncleannesse, inordinate
 affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousnes, which
 is Idolatry* ? *Col. 3. 5.* If notwithstanding these
 sinnes live in thee, this Text shall rise up and
 condemn thee to hell. Doth the Text say,
*That the father to the children shall make known
 Gods truth,* *Esay 28. 9. Eph. 6. 4. Parents bring up
 your children in the nurture and information of the
 Lord* ? It shall rise up in judgement and condemn
 those parents that have not instructed their chil-
 dren to fear God. Doth the Text say, *Thou shalt
 teach the word of God unto thy children, and that
 thou shalt talk of it when thou sittest in thy house,
 and when thou goest by the way, when thou*

lyest down, and when thou risest up? Deut. 6.7. It shall judge thee, because thou makest no conscience of *holy conference*. All these and the like Texts of Scripture, shall rise up and stand in rank to condemn thee, that hast not swayed thy heart, and framed thy life according to the Scriptures.

5. 5. All the *Ministers of God* shall sit as Justices, in common from the first preacher of righteousness unto the last) *Moses* shall Judge thee, *Ioshua, David, Esay, Jeremy, Hosea, Daniel, Paul, Peter, &c.* they shall all judge you: just as Gods Ministers judge you here, so will God; he will take all his Sermons, and clap them upon the heads of all rebellious hearers, and so damn them for ever.

6s Lastly, *The Saints* shall judge you; yea, all the Saints from one end of the world to the other, they shall assist the just Judge of heaven and earth, and they shall be interpretative Judges.

Beloved, how can the wicked escape condemnation, that have so many thousands of judges, so many thousand exhortations and reproofes, so many thousand admonitions & invitations, so many thousand mercies & profers of Christ? When God the Father, Sonne, and holy Ghost, shall judge them, when heaven and all the Angels in heaven, and all the Saints on earth, shall judge them, and condemn them? How canst thou escape? Is there never a drunkard in this congregation? is there never a swearer? never a prophane person? never a mocker? never

ver a railer in this town, that refuseth to hear-
ken to the word? the men of *Ninivie* shall rise
up in judgement against them and condemn
them, because they still live in their sinnes, not-
withstanding they have had not *three* daies
preaching, nor *forty* dayes space only for re-
pentance, but *many years of grace* calling upon
them. The Queen of *Sheba* shall condemn
many that live in their sinnes, who went many
hundred miles to hear the wisdom of *Solomon*
(for going and coming it was well-nigh two
thousand miles) but you have the word of Christ
preached in your ears, and saying, The Kingdom
of God is come among you; but you will scarce
step out of your doors to receive it, or take any
pains for - it. This one woman shall judge
them. There will be no way for the wicked to
put off their judgement: then the sonnes of *Eli*
shall have none to advocate between God and
them, none to cloak or cover their wickednesse;
they shall then have no excuses for themselves:
for, would they excuse themselves? the Saints
shall judge them: would they send out excuses?
the Saints shall cut them off.

Would they in the first place say, Alas! I was
ignorant, I knew not how to pray, or to read, or
to meditate on the Scriptures, nor to catechize
my family; I was dull and blockish to conceive
such points as were taught me; and if I did live
in sinne, it was ignorance that taught it me, I
was never book-learned? Saith *Augustine*, this
Ignoramus that was as ignorant and as little

book-learned as thou, he eschewed those sinnes that thou livest in, got the anointing of Gods Spirit to anoint his eyes, to see and know the things of God, which thou hast neglected to get; he shall condemn thee.

A second excuse is *poverty*. I have no means to live on; if I should run after Sermons, I should beg my bread: I have a great charge to keep, and nothing but my labour to maintain them; and therefore I cannot spare time, for *meditation*; I have no while to study the Scripture, to pray and to mourn for my sins, and to get grace, Well, the poor Cobler that liveth next door to Saint *Anthony*, shall rise up and condemn thee, he was as poor as thou, and had as great a charge to keep as thou: yet he mourned and wept, he got grace, and he set time apart for prayer, reading, meditation, holy conference; he shall judge and condemn thee.

Thirdly, they shall have no excuse by *employment*; I am a servant, I am commanded to doe this or that, I find so much businesse to follow, that I cannot find any time for such things. Another saith, I have great employment, I have many Irons in the fire, and therefore God, I hope, will be mercifull unto me. Well then, *Cornelius* that had as many and as great employments as thou, and *Eleazar* (*Abrahams* servant) who was a servant as well as thou, yet in as much as they walked with God, and waited upon him in his ordinances, they shall judge thee.

Fourth-

Fourthly, they shall have no excuse from their *callings and trades*; I am an *Inne-keeper*, and if I should not suffer drinking, and swearing, and gaming, I should not live. Another saith, I am a *tradesman*, and if I should ask at first just so much as I could take, I should never bring customers to my price, and so I should not live of my trade. Well, *Rahab* was an *Inne-keeper*, as well as thou, and yet shee lived by faith, and did not suffer such wickednesse in her house. So many a *tradesman*, that had the same trade, and the same imployment with thee, and as great a trade as thou, and yet have avoyded these finnes and evils that thou fallest into: they shall judge thee.

Fifthly, they shall have no excuse from the *times they live in*; Alas (saith one) I live in wretched times, all the world is given to sinne. Therefore if I should be so strict and *precise* in my wayes, if I should run after sermons, pray, sing *Plalms &c.* all the world would be against me. There are no professors of religion but are reproached and miscailed, I should lose all my friends, I should be hated and opposed; yea, it may be (the time being such) I should be accused to Councils, and have my life questioned; there is nothing but disgrace and reproach, and persecution; wherefore I was afraid, and did dispense with my conscience, Ah wretch! that man that lived in those wicked times in the same town with thee; that had the same hatred and reproach that thou wast afraid of, that hath

Use 3.

endured all the rebukes of Christ that thou wast ashamed of, yet he went on, and continued unto the end; he shall judge thee.

The use is for the *just reproof of many of the Saints of God, because they are not so circumspect and watchfull over their ways, as they ought. Dost thou judge others (saith the Apostle) and yet dost the same things thyself?* Romans 2. 2. So may I say to all such, Will you give way to sinne? will you suffer your lusts and corruptions to sway you, and not endeavour to root out or kill them rather? how wilt thou then judge the world? How wilt thou then be able to rise up in judgement against the wicked, to judge them for such sinnes wherein thou allowest and livest thy self? Surely God will never account thee for a *Saint*, if he cannot judge the world by thee. Oh this should rent the heart and bowels of those that go for Christians, that goe for Saints, yet *live* not as Saints should live. If God cannot take thee, and judge the world by thee; if he cannot take thy life, and judge the life of the Pagans, infidels, all luke-warm earthly and secure sinners, he will not account thee for a *Saint*. This then first condemns all unholinesse in the lives of them that be Saints. Beloved, if we did but live like the Saints of God in holinesse and purity in the ways of God, the Lord would put such splendor and glory upon us, that would even daunt the very face of our enemies, and make them stand amazed at Saints. But it is the contrary with us, the glory of God

is

is departed from us, *Spain, France*, and other Nations fear us not: Why? the righteoufnesse and purity of *Religion* is departed from us. For you shall have a Saint come into the company of a wicked man, and yet the swearer will not be afraid to swear before him, the drunkard will not be afraid to be drunk before him, the filthy speaker will not be afraid to utter rotten speeches before him, the lyer will not be afraid to lye before him, the worldly man will not be afraid to discover his vanities before him by his carnall and filthy conference. Beloved, all this is, because the Saints have lost their glory; if they did live as Saints ought to live, the wicked would tremble to work wickednesse before them. Though a wicked man be a drunkard, and abuse the good creatures of God when no Saint is in his company, yet if a Saint were present, he would tremble and not dare to do it. Though he were a swearer, a filthy talker, a vain worldling amongst his *companions*, yet if he come in the *Saints* company, and the Saints stand in Gods counsell, then would the wicked tremble and quake to do such things: then would they lick in their tongues, and not dare to speak any such blasphemous oaths, such vain and unprofitable words, filthy lyes and slanders. It is said of those that gladly received the Apostles words, and were added to the Church, that *the fear of them came upon the world*, Acts 2. 41. Why, did the Disciples go with swords and guns, &c. to keep men in awe thereby?

by? No they continued in the Apostles doctrine & fellowship, and did live according thereto, and this made all the world afraid of them.

Secondly, *this condemns the little difference that is betwixt the wicked of the world, and some Saints, in their lives and manners*: Beloved, is there so little difference between the Iudge and the prisoners, that any one need to come and say, I pray you sir, shew me which is the Iudge, and which is the malefactor? is there not a plain difference both in apparell and carriage; The one is in rich apparell, and the other in stinking and filthy cloaths, having his hands manacled, and his legs chained. But it is to be feared, that many of the Saints have neglected holinesse and purity in their carriage and actions which they perform, that one can hardly tell which is a Saint, & which is a reprobate. If a man deal with a Saint, and deal with a wicked man, he seeth no difference between them. Let a Saint do any action, either pray, hear, or conferr, let a wicked man do the like, there is such deadnes, such carnality, such worldly-mindednesse, such luke-warmnesse of affection, that one can hardly tell which is the Saint and which is the hypocrite. Beloved, if the Saints did live like Saints, there would be as plain a difference between a Saint and a wicked man, in their lives and behaviour, as is betwixt the Iudge and the Rogue that is to be judged by him. *Hast thou not considered my servant Iob, (saith God) how there is none like him in all the earth?*

earth? Job 1. 4, 8. If a man come to be a Saint indeed, there is never a wicked man in the Town and Country, that lives and doth as he doth, and walks as he walks, nor prays as he prays, nor hears the word as he hears it, nor that confers or meditates as he doth, that beleeves and repents as he doth, that strives against his lusts as he doth: there is none like him in all the world.

Thirdly; *it condemns the scandalousnesse of many Professors in their behaviours and actions.* Oh how do wicked men insult and exclaim here-upon, to see a Professor lead away and overcome by some lust! What (say they) are these they that are led by the Spirit of God? are these your devout men? why they can covet and scrape as well as others; they can cosen and lye as well as others. I, those that are your great Professors, and hot-spurrs, they are as covetous, as worldly, as cruell as others, though they will not be drunk, nor swear, yet they will cosen and lye, as well as others. The consideration whereof, made the Prophets heart to bleed in him, and to pray, Oh purge me from my murder and adultery, and all other my secret finnes, lest I cast mire and dirt in the faces of thy children, causing them to bear the reproaches of my finnes. *Oh let not those that seek thee, be ashamed for my sake,* Psal. 69. For thy sake that livest scandalously and offensively, for thy sake that livest covetously and scraping after the world, that art so unjust in thy dealings and promises, mire and dirt

dirt, scandals and reproaches are cast upon the children. For thy loosenesse, yea for thy carnal liberty it is that the true professors of Religion are reproached, suspected, and hardly censured in the world. What did *Jacob* when he was to walk with the people of the Land? *Gen. 35. 5. 6.* he purged his house, and (saith the text) *the terror of God was upon all the City*, he made them all to tremble at him. I tell you, all the wicked in *Ashford* would tremble at the Professors that live therein, if they did live and carry themselves like *Saints indeed*. Oh if all those that did professe themselves to be Christians, were Christians indeed; and that professe themselves to be Saints, were Saints indeed, living in the power and sanctification of holinesse; then men would say, of themselves, of a truth God is in these men, Christ dwels in them, and the Spirit of God leads and governs them indeed. If thou wouldst judge the world, take heed how the world judgeth thee, lest thou with the world be condemned eternally. It was said that *Herod feared John, because he was a just man*, *Mark 6. 23.* So if all thy neighbours did know that thou wert a just man, a holy and conscionable man in all thy ways, and in all thy actions, and that cannot endure swearing, lying, and deceit, but did see that thou wast just. and one that feared God truly, they would all fear thee.

THE
PUNISHMENT

OF Unworthy
COMMUNICANTS

At the
TABLE of the LORD:
DELIVERED

In a SERMON preached,
By that Reverend and faithfull Mi-
nister of the VVord,

WILLIAM FENNER, B. D.
Sometimes Fellow of *Pembroke Hall*
in *Cambridge*, and late Pastor
of *Rochford* in *Essex*.



London, Printed by F. L. for John Stafford.



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A SERMON OF

Mr. VVILLIAM FENNERS
Upon this ensuing Text.

1. Cor. 11 30.

*For this cause many are weak and sick among
you, and many sleep.*

THE Apostle, in this Chapter, taxeth two abuses which were then amongst the *Corinthians*: First, *the unseemly habit of women* in the congregation, from the 1 verse to the 17. Secondly, *the prophane usage of the holy Communion*, both by men & women, from the 17 verse to the end of the Chapter: & herein, from the 23. verse to the end of the 25, he sets down the Institution of the Lords Supper; and thence raileth a point of *Doctrine*.

That whosoever would come to this holy communion, they must examine themselves, that so they
may

Doctrine
i.

may come worthily; else it were better that they never came.

So we may read in the 28 verse; *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup: as if the Apostle had said, Unlesse a man examine himself, and search his own heart, and find out his sins; and dive into the secrets of his soul, to bring out his hidden corruptions, confessing them, and judging himself for them before the Lord, let them never presume to come to the holy Sacrament.*

Reas. I.

And then he proves it by three Reasonss:

The first is taken from the *end of the Sacrament*; for it is the remembrance of the death and passion of Christ: so it is in the 26. verse, *So oft as you Eat of this Bread and Drink of this Cup, you shew forth the Lords death till he come.* It is a reason that the men of this world are not acquainted withall, and theretore it was a good wish of a Reverend Father, that the Sacrament should never be ministred but there should be a Sermon, to teach men the nature of it, & to instruct them in the Mystery thereof. Wee approach unto the Sacrament hand over head, living in our sinnes, not shewing by our coming that Christ is dead; we say, and we profess that Christ dyed for our sins, and yet notwithstanding or sinnes live in us, as if Christ had not dyed for us, or as if we would proclaim that his death had no effect in us. For were we dead with Christ then sin and the living occasions of sin, would be dead in us also. My beloved, we should

should never come to this Sacrament, but we should shew forth the Lords death thereby, that is, that Christ is dead (or rather dyed) for sin, and that sin is also dead in us.

The second reason is taken from *the damned* *wrong we offer unto Christ*, if we come in our sinnes, for we are guilty *of the body and blood of Christ*, as it is in the 27. verse; nay, thou sinnest against the Lord Jesus Christ not a jot less, than *Pilat* that condemned him, than *Judas* that betrayed him, and the *Jews* that cryed out, *Crucifie him, crucifie him*: yea thou art as much guilty, as if thy own hand in thy own person had been imbrued in his blood. Now we know it is a horrible sin to be guilty of the blood & murder of an ordinary man, yea of a very rogue; how much more is it a great and fearfull sin to be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ the only and eternall Sonne of God? yet comest thou to this holy Communion, and bringest no lesse than the guilt of the body and blood of Christ upon thy soul?

The third Reason is taken from *the wofull* *wrong and injury that man brings upon his own soul*, that comes unpreparedly without examination of himself; in the 20. verse, he eateth and drinketh his own damnation; that is, he maketh himself guilty of, and lyable to the same vengeance that the crucifiers of Christ had inflicted on them. Good had it been for that man (saith Christ of *Judas*) if that he had never been born: So may I say, Good had it been for that man and that

may come *Worthily*; else it were better that they never came.

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Reas. 3.

N

woman

men if they had never been born, who come unworthily unto the Table of the Lord; for when they eat of that Bread they eat their own bane; and when they drink of that Cup, they drink their own damnation,

Use 1.

Then commeth he to make some uses of this point; and first *he condemns those that as they come, so they goe away from the Sacrament*; no more holy, no more gracious, than before; but as they come in their sins, so they go away in their sins; they came drunkards, and they goe away drunkards; they came worldlings, and they go away worldlings; they came mockers, and they goe away mockers; they came in their wrath, anger, malice, deadnesse, hypocrisie, and lukewarmnesse, and so they goe away, still never the better, but living in them as they did before: *As in the 17 verse. You come together (saith the Apostle) not for the better, but for the worse*: Whereas if they would have come worthily, they should have gone away the better, they should have received more grace and holinesse to walk with God, more power and strength against sin and corruption; yea, the Lord would have ratified and confirmed his Covenant with them; whereas living in contention, and not coming with *reparation*, they grow the worse by the Sacrament. The *Corinthians* thought that the Apostle would have praised them for their coming to Church, & receiving the Sacrament: *Shall I praise you in this (saith the Apostle) I praise you not,*

Secondly,

Secondly, He makes an use of terror against *Use 2.*
all those that dare come in their sins unto this
holy Sacrament of the Lord; for that man that
 commeth in his sins unto the Table of the
 Lord, 1. Though he may think he receives the
 Communion, yet he doth not: for this is not the
 Table of the Lord, but the Table of Devils. It is
 true, thou receivest the Sacrament of the body
 and blood of Christ; but yet coming in thy sins,
 thou receivest not his body and blood, as of a
 Saviour to save thee from thy sins: Indeed thou
 receivest the body & blood of Christ sacramen-
 tally; but it is as the Judge to condemn thee
 unto the pit of destruction, for thy damned im-
 pudency in coming so unworthily unto this ho-
 ly Sacrament. For that man cannot eat the body
 of Christ, that is not a member of Christ; there-
 fore thou must be a limb of Christ, if ever thou
 wilt receive worthily.

2. If a man come unto the Sacrament, and
 come in his sins, he cometh to his own *destruc-*
tion: for though it be a sweet banquet to re-
 fresh an humble and weary soul, and to make
 it walk more cheerfully in the wayes of God, all
 the dayes of his life: yet he that cometh unto
 it in his sinnes, and receiveth it in his unclean-
 nesse, speedeth, thereby, his own damnation, and
 receiveth it as his *viaticum* to hell. The Apostle
 compares *Baptisme* to the *red Sea*, 1. Cor. 10
 from which place *Chrysostome* saith, that as the
 red Sea was a way for the Israelites to passe
 through to *Canaan*: so it was as a grave to
 swallow

(swallow up the Egyptians to their destruction: So the Lords Supper is as a grave an open pit whereby many plunge themselves into eternall destruction; but as a chariot to the godly to carry them to heaven.

Use 3.

Thirdly, by *comming in thy sinnes, thou makest thy self lyable to Gods temporary plagues and judgements*; as appears in my Text, *For this cause many are sick and weak among you, and many are fallen asleep, [For this cruse]* which is not only a note of conclusion, but of the cause: *For this cause*, namely, because they examine not themselves, but come in their sinnes and receive it unworthily: One man hath a disease in his body, that he liverh not out half hi dayes; another is sick and weak neer unto death; a third is fallen asleep, Wherefore & why (saith the Apostle) for this cause of receiving unworthily the Sacrament of the Lords Supper.

Use 4.

Fourthly, for *instruction*, that because the people of God as well as wicked men, are guilty of unworthy coming to the Lords Table, therefore *he exhorts them, that if they would not have the Lord judge them, that they would judge themselves*, as in the 31. verse. *For if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged of the Lord.* If we would sit down and search our own hearts, and try our own spirits, and pry into our own bowels, and out with our old corruptions, and unclean lusts and enter into a new covenant with God, of holy walking before him for after time, if we would thus judge and

con-

condemn our selves, and mortifie our sinnes, comming with grace unto this holy banquet, that we might come with comfort unto this blessed Sacrament, assuring our selves that we shall escape the judgment of the Lord. For those of the Corinthians whom God struck with sicknesse, weaknesse, and death, it was to instruct others that are well and in health, that they venture not to enter upon these holy mysteries with unholie hearts, and unclean hands.

Fifthly, he concludeth with a *use of exhortation* in the 33, and 34. verses: *Wherefore brethren when ye come together to partake of the holy Communion, tarry one for another: As if he should have said, Away with all your disorders, & come not with a temporal, but with a spiritual appetite; provide not thy teeth, but thy heart for these dainties: for this is not a feast for the body, but for the soul, therefore away with all your disorders & unseemly coming unto this blessed Sacrament, take heed & repent of this sin among you, & of all other sins which you know your own conscience to be guilty of, and so come unto this holy communion.*

Now, the verse that I have read to you, is a part of that use of terror which the Apostle makes against the unworthy receivers of the Sacrament; and it contains Gods severe hand and punishment against those that come unworthily: wherein note three things.

First, the cause of their punishment, which is the unworthy eating of the Communion: For

this cause many are sick and weak among you, and many are fallen asleep.

2. Secondly, *the punishment inflicted for this sin, weaknesse, sicknesse, and mortality*: For it seems (saith *Peter Martyr*) that the Lord sent a sore plague and pestilence among them to revenge himself of them for their abuse of the Sacrament, for this cause.

3. Thirdly, there is *the Delinquents*, which are you Corinthians: *Many are sick and weak among you*, and in them all others that come unpreparedly to the Sacrament.

Chrysostom notes here, that our Apostle doth not fetch here an Argument or example of judgement from others, as he had done in the former chapter; but he brings it from themselves, who sensibly felt the wrath of God upon them for this very sin: As if the Apostle should have said, How is it, O *Corinthians*, that you dare venture to come unto the Communion so unpreparedly, and that you have no more regard of so weighty a businesse as is the receiving of the body and blood of the Lord Iesus Christ? See you not the wrath of God upon *your* dwellings, and the curse of heaven to take hold of your town? you see it this very time, that some are weak and very sick amongst you, near unto death, and others have been struck with death before your eyes, and the wrath of God is not removed; but lies yet upon you: What will you *always* goe on, and never cease to provoke the Lord to indignation and wrath against you for your sins, until

untill his jealousie hath utterly consumed you, and cleane cut you off? And howsoever many of you may think that this sickness, weaknesse, and mortality comes upon you by chance, as from the infection of the ayr, or other secondary causes, I tell you nay, but it is for this cause onely, even your unworthy comming to the Supper of the Lord. Whence we may observe this point of instruction:

That God doth most severely punish the unworthy receivers, of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. Doct. 2.

He punished the Corinthians here with sickness, weaknesse, feavers, pestilence, death temporall, and God knows how many with death eternall. Theoderet observes, that the Apostle told them of a thing that was acted amongst them, for if he had told them of such judgments as had been hid from them, & not manifest before their eyes, as if they had not felt the sickness in their bodies, and heard the bells tolling daily in their ears, they might have thought that the Apostle had but lyed unto them. So the people of Israel, as we may read in 1 Cor. 10. 2, 3. verses, they were baptized in the Cloud & in the Sea, & they did all eat the same spirituall meat, and drink the same spirituall drink; yet, as it is in the fifth verse, with many of them God was not well pleased. Nay God was so wrath with them, that within the space of forty years, many thousands of them were destroyed by death here, and God knoweth how many thousands of them in

hell. For God speaketh of *hell*, as well as of *death*; and their sin was so great, that it made God confirm it with an *oath*, that they should *never enter into his rest*. And Saint *Cyprian* saith, that the Lord hath shewed many miracles, and declared many fearfull judgements upon the unworthy receivers of the Sacrament.

Judas, who *Ambrose* thought received the Sacrament (though *Hilary* and others that he did not, but only that he did eat the Paschever, and was coming to the Sacrament also) but see his doom, *John* 13. as soon as ever he received the sop, the *Devill* entred into him; and so it is with all such as come to the Communion in their sins without repentance, and unfeigned resolution of walking ever after worthy the Sacrament; I say vnto all and every one of them, that as soon as ever thou receivest the Bread and Wine into thy mouth, thou receivest the devil together with it; as soon as ever it goeth down into thy body, the *Devill* goeth after it, and taketh more full possession of thy heart and soul.

Reas. 1.

Now the reason why the Lord doth so severely punish both with temporall judgements, and with spirituall curses, the unworthy receivers of the Sacrament, is, *in regard of the author of the Sacrament*, who is *Christ*: and that not only as he was *man*, (as the *Papists* would make us beleeve) but *Christ* as he was *God* did institute the same. So saith the Apostle in the 23. verse, *The Lord Jesus Christ in the same night that he was betray'd, took bread & break it, when he had given thanks,*

thanks, and said, *Take ye, and eat ye, for this is my body which is broken for you.* Now if the Lord Jesus did institute it, what an accursed thing is it for any to defile it, and so sin against Christ? it is a damnable thing to sin against God; but to sin against God, *as he is God in Christ*, is damnable. The holy Ghost in the second Psalm exhorts *to kisse the son lest he be angry, and so thou perish*: as if he should say, Adore the Son, Adore the Lord Jesus Christ, and so come and eat of this bread, and drink of this Cup: for if he be angry, thou wilt surely perish: If thou sin against God and so go out of the way, Christ upon thy repentance will set thee in again; but if thou sinnest against God in Christ, who is the Way, the Life, and the Truth, thou shalt surely perish from the right way: for there is no other way to bring thee in again, *Acts 4. 12.* Therefore wofull is thy case, and miserable is thy condition, if thou sinnest against Christ, prophaneing his holy ordinances which he himself hath instituted, and abusest and despisest that blessed Spirit of his, that comes to seal unto thee the redemption that he hath purchased by his blood. Better had it been for thee that thou hadst never been born: for if he be *wroth*, *blessed only are all they that put their trust in him*, and come *preparedly* unto his holy Ordinance, and that by faith imbrace the Lord Jesus Christ, but woe unto all prophane persons that live in their sins: if his wrath be but a little kindled, then woe to all drunkards, swearers, and unclean persons; but
blessed

bleſſed is that man that is come out of his ſins. For if his wrath be ſo terrible when it is but a *little* kindled, O how much more fearfull will it be when it is deeply incenled ! Therefore if thou commeſt unto this holy Sacrament in thy ſinnes, without due *preparation* and *examination*, what doeſt thou but even ſet the wrath of God burning upon thy ſoul and body from the very bottom of hell ?

When the Lord delivered the *Law* upon Mount *Sinai*, he commanded the people to *ſanctiſie* themſelves ; yea if a beaſt did but touch the mountain, he muſt dye for the ſame, even be ſtoned to death, or thruſt through with a dart, *Heb. 12.* Much more then now, when the Lord doth deliver the *Gospell*, eſpecially the groundwork and maſter-peece thereof, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and that in the moſt bleſſed manner that ever God exhibited himſelf unto man; how much more doth God require purity and holinneſſe, that all ſuch as come to receive the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the bleſſed Sacrament ſhould be ſanctified, purging their hearts, & cleaſing their ſouls from all their ſin and uncleanneſſe ? Should not a beaſt touch the mountain where God did appear, and dareſt thou touch the body of Chriſt, and drink his bleſſed bloud in thy ſinnes ? The very angels of heaven will curſe thee, and the clouds of heaven will pour down ſhowers of vengeance upon thee: for God hath more ſevere puniſhments to inflict upon ſinners under the *Gospell*, than he uſed under the *Law*, though

though then he struck them with more *visible* and sensible plagues and judgements than *ordinarily* he bringeth upon men now: as *Gaberi* for his covetousnesse was stricken with leprosie; *Corah, Dathan,* and *Abiram*, the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up quick for their rebellion against the Lord: *Er* and *Onan* were stricken dead for their wickedness, *Ieroboam* had his hand withered for stretching of it forth to strike the Lords Prophet. And though the Lord bring not such *sensible* punishments now as he did then, yet he knows how to punish the world a thousand times more than he did then, at this time. As a father hath other kinds of punishments for his son, when he is *grown up*, than he had when he was in coats, and but a *child*; then a twig or two would serve the turn; but if he come to mans estate, and then *rebell* against his father, it may be that he will disinherit him, and cast him out of his family: So in former times God did scourge and whip his people when they sinned against him: but now he hath drawn out his Church to this age, even to the age of the Gospel, he hath severer strokes of plagues and curses, wherewith to confound all prophane and impenitent sinners, that dare to abuse that blessed Sacrament of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second Reason is, *in regard of the matter of the Sacrament*, which is Christ also; who as he was the efficient cause, so in regard of Sacramental relation, he is the matter of the Communion,

munion, 1 Cor. 10. 16. *The Cup of blessing which we blesse, is it not the Communion of the blood of Christ? and the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?* Now the better matter any thing is of, the more heynous is the defilement of it: A master will not be so angry for casting his earthen vessels into the mire, as he will be for casting his rich jewels. The Bread and Wine in the Sacrament, are the blessed Communion of the precious body and blood of Christ, and darest thou defile to them? knowest thou not that thou dost greatly encrease the wrath of the Lord against thy soul thereby? That soul *whatever it was* from Dan to Beersheba, that came in his uncleanness to partake of any of those *holy* things which the children of Israel hallowed to the Lord, whether he were man, or woman, rich or poor, that person was to be cut off from the presence of the Lord, Levit. 12 wherto the Lord sets his Seal for the confirmation thereof (*I am the Lord*;) and as sure as I am the Lord, so will I see it accomplished. So my beloved, let me say unto you of England, from Dover to Newcastle, or the from one end of the town unto the other, that soul who toucheth any of these holy things with an impure heart, and cometh to partake of them with his uncleanness upon him, living in his sinnes, and wallowing in his lusts, casting off the fear of the Lord, and making no conscience to walk in Gods waies, that soul shall surely be cut off that cometh so unworthily unto the Table of
the

the Lord; not only the hand that taketh it, and the mouth that eateth it, but even the *very soul* of him that cometh, shall perish from the presence of the Lord. So *Levis. 7. 20.* *That soul that eateth of the flesh of the Sacrifices of peace offerings, that pertain unto the Lord, having his uncleannesse upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.* Now you know that all those sacrifices had relation unto Christ; but yet under the Law they were but shadows, and typicall relations, and were not so lively and effectuall means for the exhibiting of Christ, as the Lords Supper is: And therefore if such as came in their *uncleannesse* unto them, were punished with no lesse punishment than a *cutting off* from fellowship with the Lords people; what wrath and vengeance will the Lord bring upon thee that comest with thy uncleanness upon thee unto *this holy Communion*? *Augustine* saith, that man that receiveth the Sacrament unworthily receiveth a great plague to his own soul, and a great torment to his own conscience, yea and heapeth up a store of wrath unto himself against the day of wrath. Me thinks thou that livest in thy sinnes, and wilt not come out off them; when thou hearest these words [*This is my body*] and seest the bread broken before thy face, it should even make thee tremble and quake to look upon it, more to touch it, and most of all to tast it: for *it is the Communion of the body and blood of Christ*; and how darest thou come in thy sins to defile it?

Reas. 4.

Reas. 3.

A third Reason is, *in regard of the form of the Sacrament*, which is Christ too, for as he is the efficient cause that instituted it, and as he is also the matter of the Sacrament, so in the third place Christ is the *form* of the Sacrament also, wherein the confirming grace of God is sealed up unto thee: Now as it is treason for a man to offer contempt unto the Kings broad Seal; so certainly is it high treason against this King of Kings, to contemn this blessed Sacrament, which is the Seal of the righteoulnesse of faith. If thou shouldst clip the Kings Coyn, I will say that thou art a Traitor. Oh what a traytor art thou then, yea, accursed traytor in the account of God and Christ, if thou clippest his holy Communion, if thou clip it of thy examination, and due preparation, and so come hand over head, not regarding so holy an Ordinance. Thou sinnest against the Court of heaven. That which Saint *James* speaks in general of the whole worship of God [*Draw near unto God*] let me apply it in particular unto this drawing near unto God in his holy Communion, *James 4. 8. Cleanse your hands ye sinners, and purifie your hearts ye double-minded.* Draw near unto God in the hearing, reading and meditating on Gods Word; draw near unto God in Prayer, and in this holy Sacrament, and receive it for your amendment of life. [*Draw near to God*] I, that I will, (saith the wicked man) I will come to Church, & draw near unto the holy Communion. Will you so? (saith the Apostle)

Apostle:) No, first, *Cleanse your hands ye sinners,* and *purge your hearts ye double-minded:* As if he should say, never think of drawing near unto God, or setting foot on this holy ground, and handling those holy mysteries of Christ, unlesse thou first purge thy heart, and cleanse thy Soul from all thy filthy lusts and cursed corruptions, lest otherwise, thou coming in thy sins with thy uncleanness on thee, and so receiving *unworthily*, thou eatest and drinkest thine own *damnation* (as our English translation hath it) damnation to thy self, and not to another. No, God forbid, that thou shouldest by thy unworthy coming, eat and drink condemnation to another, for thou that art a child of God, and comest unto the Table of the Lord with *repentance*, & a sound measure of *preparation*, though others that sit in the same pew with thee, for their prophaneesse eat and drink their own damnation, yet thou shalt be sure to receive the *seal* and assurance of *thy reconciliation* and salvation, with free acceptance of God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, for every man shall bear his own burden.

The last Reason is, *in regard of the end of the Sacrament*, which is Christ also: For as he is the efficient, material, and formal cause, so Christ is also the final cause of the Sacrament: So it is in the 26 verse, *As oft as you eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup, you shew forth the Lords death until he come.* Not that Christ may be eaten with the teeth, or corporally received in the

Sacra-

Sacrament, or as if he were there productively, or *transubstantially*, (as the Papists say,) no, the Apostle shews, that the end of the celebration of this Sacrament, is to shew forth the death of Christ untill he come.

Object.

I, but (say the Romists) *unlesse we eat the bodie and drink the blood of Christ really; and not the consecrated bread and wine, how can any man by this unworthy communicating, eat and drink his own damnation, and make himself guilty of the body and blood of Christ.*

Answer.

I answer, a man cannot bring this guilt upon himself by eating a peece of bread, or drinking a cup of wine; but the Apostle hath an answer so fitted for this, as that all the Papists in the world shall never be able to gain say; and therefore I pray you to mark it: for he hath joyned these two verses together; *as oft as ye eat of this bread and drink of this cup, you shew forth the Lords death till he come: Wherefore whosoever eateth this bread or drinketh this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord;* even for this cause, because it is the shewing forth of Christs death till he come, Therefore if thou eatest and drinkest *unworthily*, comming in thy sinnes, and resolvest to go on in them, that as thou wert proud before thou camest to the Sacrament, so thou art still; as thou wert cholerick, angry, and impatient before, so thou art still, as thou wert luke-warm and dead hearted in Gods service before, so thou remainest still, remember I pray thee, that

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as oft as thou hast come unto the Cômunion in those thy sins, thou hast made thy self guilty of the body and blood of the Lord Iesus Christ. Therefore I beseech you to look to it, & in time to repent, and pray with the Prophet *David*, *Pf. 51. Deliver me from blood guiltinesse, O Lord.* even from the blood of thy Son, lest one day it be laid unto thy charge, and required straitly at thy hands. *For, for this cause many are sick among you, and many weak.*

Is it so then, that the Lord doth so severely punish the unworthy receiver of the Sacrament? *Take notice* (I pray you) *then from whence cometh all sicknesse, weaknesse, and mortality,* and the reason why the Lord doth send so many kind of sorrows, crosses, and miseries upon men; namely, because of the unworthy receiving of the Lords Supper. So saith Master *Calvin*, why do you wonder to see such wars, and rumours of wars, that there is so many blood-sheds, so many Towns and Cities ruined, and so many Countries sacked and depopulated, so many calamities come upon the Churches abroad, & so many plagues and scourges to over-run Christendom at this day, is not the cause plain enough? men come unto the Table of the Lord carelessly and unworthily. And, beloved, we shall never see the Lord take away his judgements here from the earth, until we betake our selves to a more diligent & holy receiving of the Sacrament. For this very cause there are so many strange diseases amongst us,
O never

never formerly known or heard of untill these dayes, as, the French Pox, the English Sweat (as they call it) that even the Physitians themselves, are blunted at them; and (as *Peter Martyr* well observes) hence are all diseases, as plagues, pestilences, (which were late amongst us) drop-sies, bloody-Flux, Agues, Apoplexies, Convulsions, burning Feavers, and Impostumes, &c. and all for this cause. One man hath fallen into a Feaver, and we wonder at the cause whence he took it; but in truth the communion hath cast him into his Feaver, and the Lord will avenge himself on him for the same. Another is sick, and he thinks that a cold hath brought it upon him; but it is the unworthy receiving of the Sacrament that is truly the cause of it. A third man dyeth before his time, even in his full strength, before in the course of nature he hath ended half his daies; but the cause is unworthy comming to the Communion, which hath taken hold on him, and cut off the thread of his life.

Many there be that expound these words in a spirituall sense, *Many are sick and weak, and many are fallen asleep*, that is to say, many have their consciences seared, and their hearts hardened, &c. and this is true also, that because men, come unpreparedly, they have their hearts hardened, and their consciences seared, and their soul, plagued with many spirituall plagues: But it is as true also in temporall judgements, thou hast had many afflictions, & much sickness laid

laid unto thee; but thank thy self for it; namely, because thou hast come unworthily unto the communion, thou hast had much weaknesse in thy body, which hath cost thee much money, and weakned thy estate; but thy unholy comming unto the Sacrament, is that which thou mayst think for it. Thou hast been reproched and contemned, and endured much shame; but take notice of it, that it proceeds from the fore-going cause, and that is a speciall reason why the Lord hath brought these and many other evils upon thee. Thou canst say the Commandements (for the most part) by rote; but thou didst never know the mysterie of this one Commandement, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.* Behold, the Communion is one of Gods own names, and how many thousands are there in the world that take this name of God in vain? Is there never a drunkard here in this congregation, that hath been at the Sacrament? Is there never a whoremonger, never a covetous worldling? Where is the man, whosoever he be among you all, that is such a one? He is in the state of damnation. Is there never a luke-warm and carnal Christian, that contents himself with a formall worship, and a dead performance of holy duties, that hath no zeal for God, nor courage for his truth, but is carelesse of all Gods commandements? whosoever amongst you are guilty of these sins, or any other, and hath come unto this holy Communion in them, they are the persons, that how oft soever they have received.

so oft they have taken this name of the Lord in vain: And if I should examine this Congregation from the one end of it unto the other, I fear that every pew would yeild some one, If not many that have taken a Cômunion (which is one of *Gods names*) in vain. Should I but examin thee that comest unto the Communion this day, how by the last Sacrament thou receivedst, and the last Sermon thou hast heard, thy faith is strengthened, thy repentance renewed, and thy obedience is increased, and thy care doubled for to walk with God? whether thou art made by them more zealous for God more forward in his worship and service; and every day more holy and heavenly minded; if not, then thou hast taken this *Name of the Lord thy God in vain*, and *the Lord will not hold thee guiltlesse*, that is, the Lord will not take away the guilt from thy conscience, but he will let thy sinne lye open, and thou shalt not be cleansed from it nor justified by the very blood of Jesus Christ, but it shall rest upon thee to thy utter ruine and destruction unlesse thou forsake thy sins, and so come preparedly unto this holy Table and banquet. I know there is a covenant of grace, a sweet refreshing for every humbled soul that is hungry & broken for his sins, and for every poor distressed conscience: let all such come and lay their sinne, upon Christs crosse, and welcome: But if there be any that come in their sins, and will not *reform* their lives, but be as they came sinners, and so they mean to continue, the Lord himselfe will

will lay this mans sins upon his own head, and they shall never be taken away from him, but Christ shall at the day of judgement pronounce him a guilty person, to his eternal condemnation.

King *Belshazzar* that abused but the holy vessels of the Temple, and the Cups thereof, what a small plague befell him for it? *Dan. 5. 27, 28. God hath numbred thy Kingdome and finished it, thou art weighed in the ballance, and art found too light, thy kingdom is departed from thee, and is given to the Medes and Persians.* So (beloved brethren) if any of you shall abuse this Cup of the Lord, coming to it with a filthy unclean heart, and polluted conscience, and earthly affections, there is a hand-writing against every soul that thus commeth this day unto the Table of the Lord: thou art numbered and weighed & found too light: Thou, O man, and woman, whosoever thou art that prophaneest and contemnest these holy things of God, thou shalt be found out, and the Lord will keep thee out by his spiritual plagues, and thy sin shall never be done away, but be required at thy hands, and stand in everlasting record against thee; O my brethren, that you would but seriously consider it, and look about you, it being so weighty a thing that so nearly concerns every one of you.

But I would not have any poor broken heart and humble Soul to mistake me, and so thereby be discouraged: but give me leave (I pray you) to use the words of the Prophet, though spo-

ken in another sence, *Psalm 115. Not unto us O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the glory*: So let me apply this doctrine unto the comfort of all poor broken hearted sinners, and beat off al carnal prophane wretches that live in their sinnes; not unto you, O drunkards, and swaggers, not unto you whoremasters and unclean persons, that wallow in ungodlinesse, I say not unto you, but unto the poor afflicted soul and contrite spirit that lyeth bleeding and gasping under the weight of his sin, & that trembles and fears being opprest with the sence of its his own unworthinesse, panting & breathing after Christ Jesus, and sping earnestly unto the Throne of grace for mercy and forgivenessse: unto thee only belongs this comfort, and therefore take it home to thee, and know it for thy self. Art thou troubled with a hard heart, and an unbelieving soul, and art even wearyed and tyred out with thy many sins and infirmities? Come thou with comfort unto this holy Communion: for thou shalt be sure to find saving good by it; to thee it shall be a spirituall medicine to heal all thy diseases, and to cure all thy strong and prevailing corruptions; and if thou come unto this holy table of the Lord, it shall make thee as it is recorded of Saint *Laurence*, able to suffer Martyrdom, and to get victory over all thy ungly affections; yea at last thou shalt tread Satan thy arch-enemy under thy foot. Therefore be not dismayed: for the Lord Jesus invites thee to come. What if thy infirmities be many, yet
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the mercies of God, which he tenders to thee in this Communion, are many more. *Samson* who was the strongest Souldier and Companion in his time that was in *Israel* to overcome the Philistims, he yet began his strength in weaknesse, being at the first overcome by a woman: So though the Lord intend to make thee a strong Christian he will make thee to begin in weaknesse to perfect thy power; to begin in sin and misery, that he may make thee to end in glory, I know Gods children here may receive temporal punishments, and bring temporall scourges upon themselves, as we may see amongst the *Corinthians* here, but it shall be for their good and amendment, namely, for their correction, and not for their ruine and destruction; that so being chastened by the Lord, they might not be condemned with the world. Therefore if thou comest carelessly and unprofitably, God will chastise thee with the rods of men, as he did *Peter*, who receiving the Sacraments with his Master overnight, yet the next day thrice denyed him; but God whipt his soul, & scourged his conscience for it, & beat him black & blew, so that he *went out and wept bitterly*: Nay he could scarce wipe off that sinne, and recover himself again whilst he lived.

Wherefore let us take heed of unprepared coming to the Sacrament; for God will not hold such guiltlesse: Yea, if his own sonnes or daughters transgresse thereby; he will make them to feel the smart of it. But now to come

to all such as come month by month, hand over head, without any examination and repentance, in their uncleanness and abomination, making no *conscience* of their reformation, let me tell them that it shall be one of Christs demands of them in the day of judgment. How oft hast thou been at my Table? How oft hast thou been partakers of that holy Communion which I gave unto thee? Hast thou come preparedly, or received worthily, or no? Hast thou eat bread at my Table with me, and lift up thy heel against me? Did I command, and thou wouldst not obey? Did I send my Ministers to thee to reform, but thou wouldst not be *reformed*? Did I check and reprove thee for thy pride, blasphemies, drunkenesse, covetousnesse, anger, wrath, malice, fornication, hypocrisie and prophanesse in the matter of my worship? and yet wouldst thou *still* live in these sinnes? Where are all the Sacraments that thou hast received; How hast thou behaved thy self? Where are the sinnes that thou hast forsaken, & pleasing corruptions that thou hast abhorred? What grace and holiness hast thou received by the *meanes* thou hast enjoyed? and how hast thou manifested the same through thy whole conversation? Oh! woe, woe, unto thee, yea and a world of woes unto thee; and unto all such as shall be silent and speechlesse to those or the like demands of Christ: for they cannot say they have come out of their sins, and have been reformed by the means of grace, and have received spiritual nourishment and refreshing

refreshing from the heavenly banquet of the Communion of the body and blood of the Lord Iesus Christ.

A man will especially regard the last words of a dear friend, who is as a mans Soul, when he is to speak upon his death bed, and will be carefull to remember them; and dost thou not more regard the last Will and Testament of our Lord Iesus Christ? we count it a horrible sinne to alter the last Will of a man that is dead. Beloved, the Lord Iesus, before he left this world, instituted this blessed Sacrament as his last Will and Testament, and hath given us a charge, that as we would not eat & drink our own damnation by bringing the guilt of his body and blood upon our Souls, so that we should discern the Lords body, and not come unpreparedly in our sins and abominations, without reverence and respect of such holy & high mysteries, as if there were nothing more to be received and looked for after, then the bare & naked element of bread and, wine, or as if we did come to communicate with unclean Devils. O my brethren, if you had but faith, you would be able to discern Christ in the Sacrament; and therefore when thou comest unto it, thou must prepare and sanctifie thy self to communicate with him in those holy Ordinances and heavenly mysteries of his most pretious body and blood: for if so be that thou retainest thy sins, and so come unworthily unto this holy Table of the Lord, thou art a great Covenant-breaker with God: For thou never comest

comest unto the Communion, but thou makest and renewest thy covenant with God, wherein thou promisest thus much or the like in effect. Lord, I have been formerly a drunkard, but now I promise to give it over, and never to be a drunkard more; I have been a scoffer at Religion, & a mocker & derider of thy children; but now I faithfully promise (Lord) that I will never do so any more. I have been wicked and sinfull, disobeying and rebelling against all thy holy Commandements, and respected not thy judgements and thy promises, and have been carelesse of thy glory: But now (Lord) as I eat this bread, and drink this wine; so I covenant unto thee, & promise to thee, that I will amend all my sinfull ways, & become a reformed Christian. And as I ever look that the body & the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, represented in the elements, should nourish my soul unto eternal life, so I promise to be disobedient unto the Devill, but faithfull & obedient unto thee. I wil stop my ears against the alluring inchantments of the world, and wicked suggestions of the Devil; but I will open them wide to hearken to thy voyce, that I may obey thy commands. But now as thou hast made it, so if thou hast broken this thy covenant with God, returning to thy former courses of sin and disobedience against him, know thou, that this covenant of thine which thou hast broken, shal stand in full force against thee: for God will assuredly require it at thy hands: and al the Sacraments which thou hast received, thou

thou hast received them but as so many seals and pledges of thy just deserved condemnation.

But some man may object and say, *Do all that come unworthily unto the Sacrament, eat and drink their own damnation? Then many hundreds, yea thousands are damned: Are all damned that have eat and drunk unworthily?* Object.

Ans. No; but a man may eat and drink his own damnation three ways: First, in regard of guilt and liableness unto Gods wrath: and so he that eateth and drinketh his naturall food, his dinner, supper, or breakfast in his sinnes, eateth and drinketh his own damnation: yea, whosoever thou art, that comest into this holy banquet in thy sinnes, in thy pride, choler, malice, wrath or revenge, covetousnesse, hypocrisie, and deadnesse in Gods service, thou never eatest a bit of bread, but thou eatest and drinkest thine own damnation; that is, thou eatest and drinkest that which will witness against thee another day *Deut. 28. 16, 17, 18, 19. ver. &c.* If thou wilt not hearken to the voyce of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all his commandements, then all these curses come upon thee & shall overtake thee: Cursed shalt thou be in the City, & cursed in the field, cursed shalt be thy basket and store. Now if thy bread be cursed, then thou art cursed also that eatest it. Secondly, in regard of the seal and obligation in the Conscience; so he that eateth & drinketh the Sacrament in his sins, eateth & drinketh his own damnation; that is, he eats and drinks that

that which seals up his damnation against the great day of account. And thus many amongst us, and I fear the most part of this Congregation, have eat and drunk their own damnation. But this seal may be broken off, and God grant it may.

Thirdly, in regard of figillation in heaven, and so he that eats and drinks unworthily, and will not be reformed, he that receives the Sacrament time after time, yet still retains his sins, and will not be humbled for them, nor forsake them, he setteth a seal in heaven upon his own damnation, that all the whole world can never break off, but such a one most certainly is a damned creature.

And now (my brethren) God forbid there should be any such here, but that this seal may be broken off: And O that God would put some strength into this word, that it may be broken off by your godly sorrow for your sin, and forsaking of them all: for if this seal be set on your damnation, why do I yet speak unto you, and intreat & beseech you in the name of Christ to come home and be reconciled to him? and I desire to stand here, as *Jehoiadab* set Porters at the gates of the City, and of the house of the Lord, to keep off all those that come in their uncleanness, *2 Chron. 23. 19*, So I stand this day as the Porter of the Lord, to keep the Lords watch, that no prophane wretch, no proud hearted sinner, that means not to enter into a new course of life, that no such one come unto this holy

holy communion, I charge you as you will answer the guilt of Christs blood before Gods Throne, that you meddle not with it. But now if there be any that would absent himself because he will the more freely go on in his sins, let him know that such a one excludes himself from the benefits & merits of Christs death, and shal never have the benefit of a Redeemer at the day of judgement; but shall perish in his sins for his carelesse neglect, and fearfull contempt of so effectuell and powerfull means of salvation and purging, as is the blood of Christ, truly and really offered in the Sacrament. Wherefore if thou comest or comest not, woe is thee, if so be thou livest and continuest in thy sins, and goest on in thy unholy courses.

And now to conclude; as the Cherubin stood before Paradise with a naked sword to keep *Adam* out, that he might not enter and so eat of the tree of life: so I bring with me the sword of God, to run it up to the hilt in the heart and bowels of every ungodly man, every rebellious and impenitent sinner this day, that dares presume to rush upon this holy Ordinance of God, with a polluted and an unclean heart. Therefore let me exhort thee, that as thou tendrest the eternall good of thy soul, so thou be carefull not to eat the body of Christ, nor drink his blood in thy sins, lest thou eat thine own bane, and drink thine own curse: Nay, so doing, thy misery will be so great, as a good man well weighing and considering of it, said, I professe I had rather
- have

have all my veins cut open, and my blood spilt on the ground, than deliver the body and blood of Christ unto a prophane sinner: for why should I deliver his own bane and destruction unto him? But now (my brethren and beloved) come out of your sins, come and welcome, if you part with your lusts, & so come, you shall be sure to have his blood to wash your heart, and cleanse you, his righteousness to clear you, and cloath you, his graces to strengthen you, his spirit to heal and to sanctifie your hearts and natures: and the Lord Jesus Christ to supply all good that is wanting in you, But if yet notwithstanding all this that hath been said, you will go on in your sins, and live as you did in your swearing, whoring, lying, and drinking, and all manner of filthinesse; and as you came unto it unclean, so you depart away from it more unclean, and never make any conscience of any reformation, I pronounce this day before God and his elect Angels, that thou shalt surely perish, and thy soul and body be damned and tormented in the scorching flames of hel for evermore. Therefore hearken unto instruction, and give ear unto counsell, now whiles that the Lord offers it unto you, that so you may not harden your hearts any more, but may hear & obey, that your souls may live, and so coming together to this holy and blessed Communion for the better and not for the worse, you may return home with the blessing of children.

FINIS.

THE
D V T I E

OF
COMMVNICANTS.

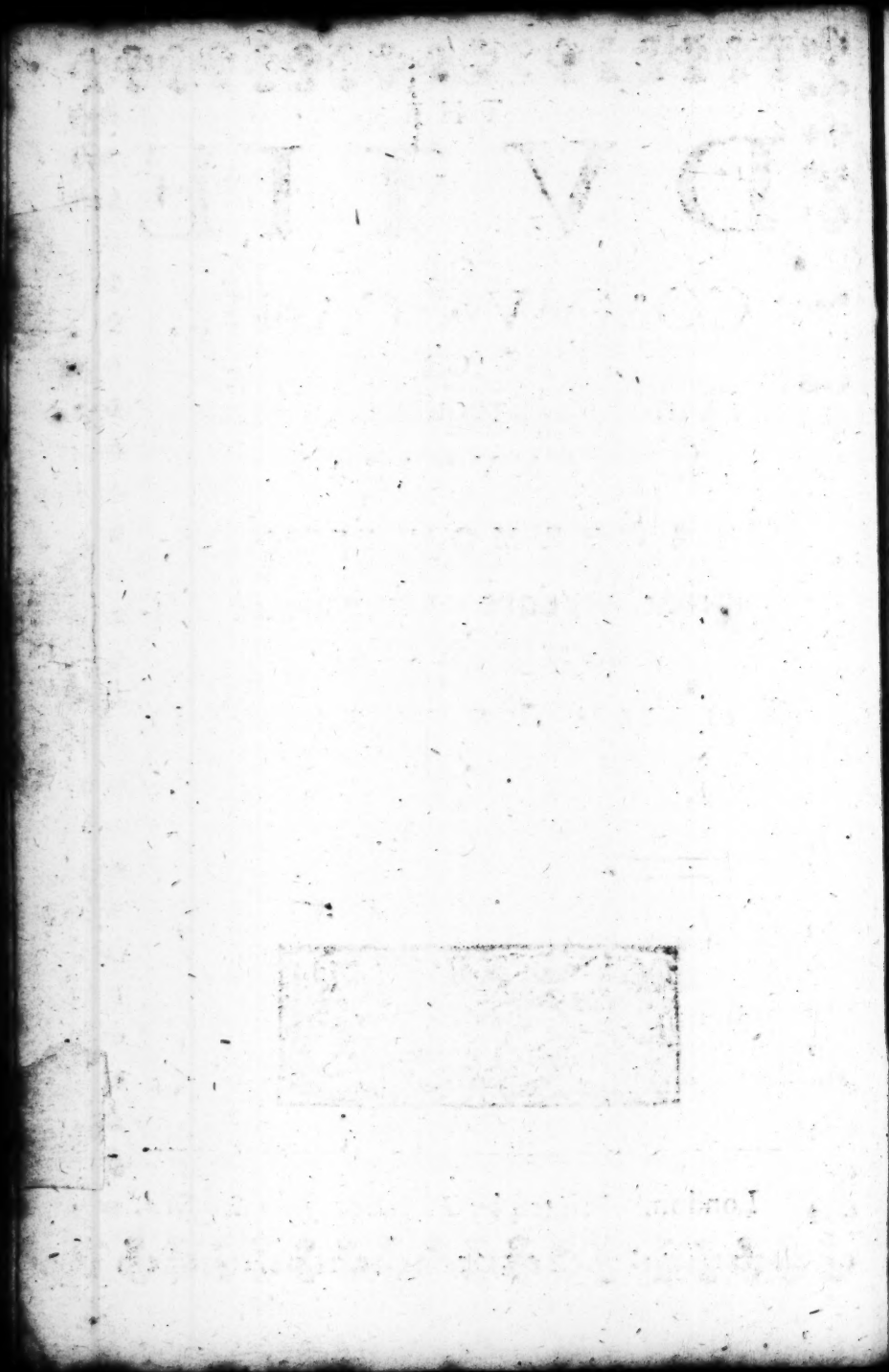
OR,
Examination required of every
COMMVNICANT.

In a SERMON preached,
By that vigilant and painfull Mi-
nister of the VVord,

WILLIAM FENNER, B. D.
Sometimes Fellow of *Pembroke Hall*
in *Cambridge*, and late Pastor
of *Rochford* in *Essex*.



London, Printed by F. L. for John Stafford.





EXAMINATION

Required in every COMMUNICANT.

A Sermon preached by master *william Fenner* Minister of Gods word.

2 Cor. 11. 28.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup.

IN the latter part of this Chapter the Apostle treats of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper: And first he reproveth the Corinthians for their unworthy coming to it as we see in verse 18. There were Errors, and Schismes, contempt of the poor, drunkenness, excess, disorder, and unprofitableness in the duties of God, they waxed worse and worse
by

by the Sacrament. All these, and sundry other abuses were among them; so that they did not eat the Lords Supper aright as they ought.

Secondly, *he reduceth them back to the first priene institution of it by Jesus Christ, as we see in verse 23.* that hereby they might both see how grievously they had abused the Sacrament, and likewise see how they might sanctifiedly use it.

Thirdly, *he shews the danger of unworthy receivers:* and this he sets out two waies.

First by *the grievousnesse of the sinne;* such a person makes himself guilty of the bodie and blood of the Lord, as we see, verse 27.

Secondly, *by the dolefull consequence that follows upon it;* *He eats and drinks damnation to himself,* as we see verse 29.

The sum
of the
Text.

Now in *this* verse (that I may not trouble you with speaking of any more matter than what is necessary for the present Theam) *he shews how we may prevent, escape, and avoyd this danger;* how we may take an order that we do not fall into this grievous sin, that we do not plunge our selves into this grievous misery: *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.* A man must examine himself, sift his own soul, and labour to prepare himself, before he dare to venture on this sacred businesse. In these words, before we set upon the particular handling of them, we may observe, that

Obser. 1.
We must
not rush
upon the
Sacra-
ment.

We must not rush upon the Sacrament.

There must somewhat be done before we can receive

receive it, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup.* There are none of the Ordinances of God, that a man may safely rush upon. Wouldest thou offer any sacrifice to God? but thou must stay first, and *examine* thy self, whether there be not something yet undone. It may be thou hast offended God in something or other; It may be thou art out with thy brother; thou must first go and be reconciled to thy brother, and then offer thy gift; *Matth. 5.* So, wouldest thou reprove thy neighbour? It may be there be somewhat out of order, some indisposednesse in thee, thou art not yet in case to set on this duty; it may be thou art faulty, and guilty thy self: It may be thou hast a beam in thine own eye, *First* (saith the Text) *pull the beam out of thine own eye, and then thou mayest see clearly to pull the moat out of thy brothers eye, Matth. 7. 5.* So, would'st thou reform thy outward man? But it may be thy inward man is not reformed: there is some lust in thy heart, some pride in thy will, some stubbornnesse in thy spirit, some Idoll in thy boiome; *First, cleanse the inside of the platter, Matth. 23. 26.* There is never an ordinance of God that can be done, but there must be somewhat done first, a man must do something before, As in the choice of Officers, as Ministers, as Deacons, other Officers in the Church, first, they must be *proved* before they be chosen: so in all the Ordinances of God. Would we come to the *Sacrament*? There is somewhat must be done first, we must

examine our selves, and root out all unsanctifiednesse, and indisposition, that cannot stand with the right communicating in the Lords Supper. And so in every other good duty.

Reason 1.

The reasons of this are.

Naturally
we are not
invited
guests.

First, *because naturally we are not invited guests*, we are not such as are invited to the Lords Supper; we are children of wrath, and as long as we are in such an estate, we cannot come aright to the Communion. This is *childrens bread*, and it cannot be given to *dogges*. Christ whensoever he sets his daintys before his people, he tels us for whom they are, *Take, eat, this is my body that is broken for you*. This is the Supper that is made for you, as it is in this Chapter, verse, 24. First we must prove our selves invited-guests.

Simile.

It is true, the Lord Christ invites every man to the Lords Supper; but he *invites him methodically*, he must be in such an estate: but every man is not so fitted: a man must be a member of Christ that means to partake of Christs death; he must be one that is in Christ, he must be able to prove that he is *ingrafted* into Christ, he must be able to shew the mark of the Lord Christ on him. As it is with some of your great dinners, and feasts in this City, you have tickets and all that are admitted to the feast, must shew their ticket before they are admitted; So thou must be able to shew thy *ticket*, that thou hast an invitation from Christ, thou must have a *mark, & token*.

ken from Christ that thou comest, and comest with his warrant.

A second reason is, *though thou be invited, it may be thou art not disposed.* If a man will do a thing that he is naturally indisposed to, there must be somewhat done before of necessity: So the Lords Supper, it is a thing that naturally we are indisposed unto, therefore somewhat must of necessity be done first. Naturally we are unholy, we are unthankfull, and carnall, we are in our sinnes, strangers from God, and the Covenant of God, and from the seal of the Covenant: all this indisposition must be wrought out before we can comfortably come hither. If Christ would have the very *Chamber* first trimmed, before he instituted the Passeeover, and the Sacrament, much more will he have the *soul* disposed for him, and the heart cleansed from all filthinesse, If he that was of the Peace-offering being indisposed, having his uncleannesse upon him, was to be cut off from his people. *Levit. 7. 20.* what will God doe to such people as come hither in their uncleannesse and indisposition, un sanctified and unqualified?

Thirdly, *suppose we were both invited and disposed, yet this is not enough: This is a solemn Ordinance of God, and an ordinary disposition will not serve the turn.* Though every child of God be ordinarily disposed to every good word and work, to pray, and to hear the word of God, he is prepared and furnished to e-

Reason 2.
We are in
disposed.

Reas. 3.
Solemn
preparati-
ons requi-
red to the
Sacra-
ment.

very well doing ordinarily and habitually ? but a man must be disposed *further* ; There is a *solemn preparation* required to the Communion, as in *Dent. 16. 15.* there were *solemn feasts* in the Law : so there is this *solemn feast* in the Gospel, and there are *solemn preparations* required thereto. When we come to the Communion, to eat the Lords Supper, it is not eating and drinking in Christs presence ; for so may any reprobate do, and yet Christ may say to him, Depart from me, thou worker of iniquity. It is not to come and sit in your Pewes, and wait till the Bread comes, & take it; and till the Cup comes, and drink it: so many a Reprobate may doe, as the *Corinthians* did, that did eat and drink their own damnation : But there must be a *solemn preparation* to it, to be *sealed wth the Spirit of Promise*, to be righteous by faith in the body & blood of Christ; For a man to be humble and empty of his sinne, to be thirsty after the precious blood of Christ, to be fed and built up in the promises ; It is a weighty thing to come to the Communion: a man must be a *worthy man*, or else he hath nothing to do here, As *Solomon* said of *Adonijah*, if he be a *worthy man*, not a hair shall fall from his head; but if wickednesse be found in him, he shall dye, 1 *Kings. 1. 52.* So: if we be worthy men and women, not a hair of our heads shall fall to the ground, none of the curses shall light on us, that light on unprepared persons: but if wickednesse be found in us, if we be guilty of any sinne, if we live in any lust

not

not mortified; if there be any prophaneſſe in our lives, in our families, in our courſes and callings, though we catch hold of the horns of the Altar, though we partake of theſe holy mysteries, yet we ſhall be ſo far from having any mercy, as that we ſhall haſten our own ruine, we ſet a ſeal on our own judgement, and make our caſe worſe than it was before.

Let us take notice of it and never dare to ruſh on any of Gods ordinances. You know what became of the fooliſh man in the Goſpel, that when they were invited to come to the marriage Supper, he thought it was nothing but to come with them that came, to crowd in with them and ſit down among the reſt; he conſidered not what he went about, that he might be prepared accordingly; the event was this, he was caſt out into utter darkneſſe, *Math. 22. 13.* It is dangerous *ruſhing* on any of Gods ordinances. To ruſh upon prayer, for a man to fall down upon his knees, and to utter any thing before the Lord haſtily with his mouth, not conſidering that God is in heaven, and he on the earth. A mans word may damn his own ſoul, & pull vengeance on his own pate, his prayers may prove a curſe, his prayer for mercy may be turned into vengeance: So the higher the ſervice, the greater the danger. As the ſervants of *Abigail* ſaid to her, *Conſider what you do*, when evil was determined againſt them: ſo conſider what you do when you come to the Sacrament, you come to a weighty thing, to that that will either ſet you

uſe.

To take heed of ruſh performance of duties.

2 Sam. 15. 17.

neerer to the Kingdom of God, or hell and condemnation. But I let this passe, and come to the words themselves.

Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.

In these words observe.

Parts of
the text.

First, the *matter of the duty commanded*; that is to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

Secondly, the *manner of doing the duty*; not only to eat of that bread, but so to eat; and not only to drink of that cup, but so to drink.

Thirdly, the *rule of direction how to come in a right manner to partake of it*, that is, by examining of our selves, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

Fourthly and lastly, the *benefit following that direction*, and that is in this word, *But: let a man examine himself.* He had said before, *He that eats and drinks unworthily, is made guilty of the body and blood of the Lord: and, he discerneth not the Lords body,* vers. 27. But, saith he, as if he should say, if a man would prevent this, if a man would take order that he be not guilty of the body and blood of Christ, that he do not come undiscerningly to these heavenly mysteries, but with comfort, & title to the promises, with hope & confidence & speeding there of the benefits of Christ exhibited, then, *let a man examine himself, & so let him eat of that bread, & drink of that cup.*

Now

Now I wil passe over some of these points, namely that we are to eat that bread, and drink that cup. *There is a necessity that we should receive the Lords Supper.* I need not stand on this, you know it sufficiently proved by the Sacrament of the Law, which was the fore-runner of this sacrament, that soul that did not partake of that, was to dye the death, he was to be *cut off* from Gods people, *Num. 9. 13.* If the Lord was so carefull of those Sacraments that were inferior to these (and yet they were of the same *substance* as these) that the man that neglected to come to them, to partake of them, was to be *cut off* to be *excommunicated* from the people of God, & to be rent off from the congregation of the Saints, then how much more for these heavenly, and weighty, and glorious Ordinances of the *Gospel*, which are far more glorious than them of the *Law*? But I will not stand upon that.

Necessity
of recei-
ving the
Lord
Supper.

I might here take notice too of the frequency of the duty: for so it hath dependence on those words formerly, *As oft as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye shew the Lords death*, and so, that is, as oft as ye eat, do it in this manner. This is the command of God, that we *oft* receive the Lords Supper. In the *Primitive* times *St. Basil* observes, that they eat it *three or four times* in a week, on Wednesdays, Frydays, and on the Lords day; but that was a time of persecution, I will not stand upon that. I think it not needfull; But it should be *often*, we should not thirst it only upon Easter and Whitsontide,
and

The
Lords
Supper to
be recei-
ved ofte

and Christ-tide, three or four times in the year.

Again, I might observe here from this mystery received, in that he calls it *Bread*, I might observe against the Papists Transubstantiation, that the bread received, *is not transubstantiated*, but is bread, still: & against that of receiving in one kind. *So let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup:* he doth not say, let him eat of that bread only, but he directs the commands in *both kinds*. But I let this passe, and come to the second thing, that is, the *manner* how we should do this duty.

So let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

Observ.
The manner of performance of duties to be regarded.

It is not, first let him examine himself, & then let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup: But, let him *examine* himself, and then, *SO*, let him eat: implying, that *examining a mans self helps, or ought to help a man to a right manner*: and when he hath gotten a right manner, then to eat that bread, & drink that cup; that he may do, not only for *matter*, that which the Lord commands, but, for *manner*, as the Lord commands. Beloved, the Lord stands on *circumstances* as well as on duties: we are all racers, we run, we must *so run that we must obtain*, 2. Cor. 9. 29. *So* pray that we may speed, *so* hear that we may be converted, *so* reprove that we may be edified; *so* behave our selves in our places and callings, that we may glorifie God. It is not enough for a man to run, but he must *so run*, if he mean to obtain. Every man will be speaking and doing good things; but *so speak* and *so do*, Jam. 2. 12. The Lord calls upon us to have a care of the

the *manner* of duties, as well as of the *matter* of duties. It is not enough that a man come to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, but *so* to eat, and *so* to drink of it, he must partake of the Lords Table, and so as the Lord enjoys.

Now the *Reasons* of this are :

First, *because the same Lord that commands the matter, commands the manner too.* The Lord will have his service well done, as well as done, he will have the work well performed, as well as performed. It is not only the thing that the Lord stands upon, but the right manner and kind of doing it.

When David perswaded his sonne Solomon to worship the God of his Fathers, he bids him not only do the thing, but to do it in a right manner, *And thou my sonne Solomon, know thou the God of thy Fathers, and serve him,* is that all? No, but, *with a perfect heart, and a willing mind,* 2. Chron. 28. 9. He commands him to do it, not only for the matter of it, but in the right manner of it. A man may serve God, but if it be not with a perfect heart, and a willing mind, and with a chearfull spirit; if he be not ready to every command, if he doe not open his ears to every rebuke, a man doth not serve God at all. The *manner* either makes all, or marres all.

Secondly, another Reason is, *because circumstances, overthrow actions, if they be not rightly and duly observed.* As for example: In Scripture, prayer is an action commanded of God :

Reason 1.
The Lord commands the manner as well as the matter.

Reason 2.
Circumstances overthrow actions, as in Prayer.

God : the Lord commands us to *pray*, that we call upon his name *duly*, *every day*, in all our *needs and necessities*, upon all occasions *continually*. But now if we pray not *aright*, not in that *manner* that the Lord hath prescribed; if we pray either with a guilty, defiled conscience, with cold affection, with a dead spirit, or without departing from iniquity, or without a pure heart : if a man pray without the right manner of prayer, he marres all his prayer, it is a *howling*, and not a prayer. *They did not cry to me* (saith God) *when they howled on their beds*, that is, when they prayed, because they did not pray in a right manner, the Lord calls it *howling*, and not a prayer. *We roar as Bears*, in *Isay 59. 12.* the Prophets nicknames it, speaking in the person of the people, he calls it the *roaring of Bears*: The Lord had as lief hear the barking of a Dog, or the grunting of a Swine, as a man that doth not pray *aright*, with a bleeding heart, with contrition of soul and spirit, with a *spirit of grace and supplication*. When a man prays, and prays not aright, his prayer leaves that name, it is no more a prayer in Gods account.

2. Preaching.

And so *preaching*, it is an admirable action; but if a man do not preach *aright*, if it be *flattering with the enticing words of mans wisdom*, or *beating the air*, and to shew his own *learning*, this overthrowes the action of preaching, he preacheth not *Christ*; but *himself*; not the *Gospel*, though the *Gospel* be in his *Sermon* all over, yet *himself* he preacheth, the

the action is marred, the circumstances marre it.

So in the *Lords Supper*, if a man come not prepared, that he have not the *Wedding Garment*, that he be not aright qualified according to the requisites of the Gospel, this is not to eat the *Lords Supper*. Saith the Apostle, *When ye come together, this is not to eat the Lords Supper: you think you eat the Lords Supper, you take the bread and the cup, and can say, Blessed be God, and I pray God to blesse me: you may come and do these actions, but the action is altered, the action is diversified when it is not done in a right manner.*

3. Receiving the Sacrament.

So if a man come to reprove his brother, if he himself be faulty, do you think this is sufficient reproof? No, it is hypocrisie. *Thou hypocrite, Matth 7. 5.* his reproof of his brother is hypocrisie.

Brotherly reproof.

So, for men to tell one another of their faults, and to tell them with a Spirit of bitterness; this is not Christian dehortation, but *biting one another, Gal. 5, 15.*

And so for eating and drinking, beloved, eating is lawfull, and drinking is Lawfull, and marrying and giving in marriage, all these are lawfull, yet if a man eat not aright, & drink not aright, and marry not in the Lord, & eat & drink without title to the Lords creatures, that he have not interest in the Covenant of God, if Christ be not in it, how shall he have comfort? Nay, that very nature of his eating is altered, his eating

5 Eating and drinking.

ting, and drinking and marrying is a sinne. As our Lord Christ shews of the old world, *They did eat and drink; and were marrying & giving in marriage, till Noah entred into the Ark, and the flood came: and swept them away, Matth. 24, 37.* he reckons their eating & drinking among their sins, among the reasons & causes why the flood came upon them, they did eat and drink, and marry and give in Marriage.

Object.

You will say, *was that the reason the flood came? And was that an argument of their security? Did not Noah eat and drink and marry? And were not his sons married that were in the Ark, and he a grandfather.*

Ans.

But he did it *aright*; therefore his eating and drinking is not brought as a sign of security, but of the old world, that were carnal and wretched people, it was; because they did not eat and drink *aright*.

There be Rules in eating and drinking, in talking and discoursing, in doing the duties of our callings: There be Rules how you ought to buy and sell, and to do every good word, and works. If these Rules be not observed, the Rules of Gods blessed word, the *actions* themselves are altered; though the *things* be commanded of God, yea they are cursed and *abominable* things, when the true form and fashion of them is not regarded, though they be never so godly.

Simile

A garment though it be never so good, if the Taylor handle it not well, it is marred in the making, if he bring it not to a right forme, and

and make in a right manner, the man that is to have the garment, is disappointed. So Timber, though it be never so excellent, though it be all Oak, or Elm, or whatsoever tree, though it be never so fit for building, if the Artificer deal not well in handling it, the inhabitant that comes there, may curse the day that ever he came there: If it be not well built, it may fall on his head and kill him, and all that belong to him. So it is in all the Ordinances of God, and the matters of Religion, we must not only do them for matter, but for manner too: for that either makes or marrs them.

Thirdly, another Reason is, *because only the right manner of doing duties gets the blessing.* A man may pray a thousand times, and never be heard, he may hear a million of Sermons, and never be converted, a man may come to all the Sacraments in the year, all his life long, and never be sealed against the day of redemption. A man may do the things, and never get the blessing; all the blessing lies, in the right manner of doing. Blessed is that servant, whom, when his master comes, he shall find so doing. *Matth 24. 48.* He saith not, *Whom when his master cometh, he shall find doing.* Christ when he cometh to judgment, shall find many doing; it may be he will come in prayer time, it may be he will come in the morning, when many thousands shal be at their prayers in their families; it may be he'l come at night when all are at prayers in their houses; it may be he wil com on the Sabbath, when al the country

Reas. 3
The
right
manner of
doing du-
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sing.

is at Church, hearing of Sermons, he shall finde many thousands *doing*, and *praying*. But blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he comes, shall find *so* praying, *so* hearing, *so* receiving the Sacrament: He shall find many believing, but *so* beleieving gets the blessing: many professing, but it is *so* professing that gets the comfort. I say, all the blessings of God are promised to the right *manner of doing*. Now, what is it, when we do duties, what do we look for? Is it not for a *blessing*? Why do we do the duties, if we doe not do them *so* as we may get the blessing? Now except we observe the right manner of doing them, all is to no purpose.

Reason 4.
Christ's
example.

Fourthly, another Reason is, *the example of Jesus Christ*; Christ hath given us an example that we should do as he did: Now he did not only do that which his Father bid him do, for *matter* but for *manner*, both in all the words he spake, and in all the deeds that he performed. For the words he spake, *As the Father hath said unto me, even so speak I*, John 12. And in John 14. 31. *As the Father hath given me commandement, even so do I*. Mark, he did not only obey his Father in the *matter* of his command, but in the *manner* of it. And as Christ hath done thus, so all that are Christs, all the servants of God in all ages, they have been very carefull, especially of the *right manner* of obeying God. As it is said of Noah Gen. 6. 22. *As the Lord commanded Noah, even so did he*, just as the Lord commanded; him he did not only make an Ark, but *so* he made

made all the rooms: so he made it in the same form and figure, and in the same similitude, just as the Lord set him down in the pattern, even so did he. So the Lord sets down the pattern of every good word and work, of all our prayers, and Sermons, and hearing, and conference, and keeping the Sabbath, and speaking holily: all our actions have their pattern set down in the word of God. Now as we are to do the things; so we are to do them in the same manner as the Lord commands, even so must we do:

Fifthly and lastly, *except we do it in a right manner, except as we come to the duty, so we come to the right manner, we can never glorifie God; The glory of God lies in the manner of doing of things. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorifie your father which is in heaven, Matth. 15. 16.* Mark, the light must not shine only in our lives & conversations; but so that the duty must be a means to the glorifying of God. Now the means must have it's proportion, & likenesse, & nature; and mold, and frame, from the nature of the end. Look how the end is that the dutie looks unto, so must the frame and fashion of the duty be: Now if the end of all our actions be, that God may be glorified, that must put a form and fashion upon every duty, that it may be so, that he may have glory. Suppose a man praye very day in his family, and call all his household, his servants, and wife and children, and all under

Reason 5
From
Gods glory.

der his roof about him every morning and evening : he may dishonour God by prayer every day on this fashion : if a man pray coldly, and carelessly, for form and fashion, without faith, and life, he makes all the ordinances of God vile, and all the works of God contemptible : his household sleeps, one snorts it may be ; another is infinitely prophane it may be, and though there be divers that would faine be quickned, and wakened, yet his prayer is so cold, there is no life, or heat, nor warmth in it, that God is exceedingly dishonoured, and all are thereby rather worse than better. So for a mans preaching, though it be never so good a duty, yet he must labour to preach *so*, as the Apostle speaks of his preaching and labour in the work of his Ministry, how he may *edifie* others, and *save* his own soul. *So fights I, not as one that beats the ayre; but so as I may get the mastery* : We must *so* preach, that we may attain the conversion of the people; or else we may rather do as *Hophni* and *Phineas*, the sonnes of *Eli*, that made the table of the Lord contemptible, and the Sacrifice of the Lord loathsome in the eyes of the people: So may we do with the ordinances of God.

Take *any* duty of religion, if it be not done *aright*, God hath no glory by it. Suppose thou wouldest reprove thy brother, and tell him of his fault, and check him for his backwardnesse, or omission of some duty, and for the commission of some sinne; if thou do it, do it with a spirit of compassion, and bowels of Jesus Christ,

with

with an humble heart, with a feeling and a pure conscience; I say thou gettest a blot to thy own self, and causest God to be ill spoken of, and the very way of his name to be dishonoured: This will be the effect of it; and so in every other duty. And so I come to the use.

Is it so, that we must not only come to the Sacrament, but come aright; or do any dutie, but we must do it in a right manner? This serves to condemn that naturall popery, that is in mens hearts, that is, of opus operatum, of the deed done; this is the religion of the Church of Rome, that so man do the duty (indeed it is better if it be done in a right manner,) but if it be done, there is somewhat a man may look for by that, If a man come to the Sacrament, the very eating of the Host, the very partaking of the body of Christ, they make it meritorious: so the very hearing of so many Sermons, the very saying of so many prayers; the very performance of so many duties: the very thing it self, nakedly considered, it is of some validity. This is rooted into the hearts of men, we see it up and down; people do the dutie, and think all is well enough, when they consider not how it is done. People pray, but not with zeal; they hear, but not with reverence: People come to the Sacrament, not for the better, but for the worse they come not in a right manner; and yet every one hopes to speed, and builds himself on this, that God accepts of him. But this is the folly of mens hearts; it is an evident argument

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that men go foolishly to work in the ways of God. It is the brand of a fool not to be able to *observe circumstances*. *Aristotle* the heathen, he saith, *it is the part of a wise man to think of, and understand the manner of actions*; as a wise man saith, he observes circumstances. It is the part of wisdom to observe the right circumstances of every action, as it is, *Ephes. 5. 15. Walk circumspectly*, that is *accurately*, as it is in the original, *not as fools, but as wise*. Mark, he perswades them to a right manner of walking; not only to walk in a good course, in praying, and hearing, in obedience, and sobriety, in temperance, faith, and diligence in our callings; but do it *accurately*, in a right manner; do it as wise men, and not as fools, who do it in a wrong manner. It is the part of a fool, I say, to do a thing, and to leave the right manner of doing it. Now this is nothing with God, the Lord doth not esteem any action, though it be never so frequently done, except it be done with his own stamp, except it have his own character upon it.

I remember a story in *2 King. 17. 26*. The Assyrians there observed, that God sent Lions among them, because they did not observe the right manner of the God of Israel: they worshipped the God of Israel; but because they observed not the right *Manner* of his word, he sent Lions among them, to tear and devour them in pieces. So though we pray, and hear, and read, and professe, and have a *name* that we live; & though we be taken for good people, and
 heap

heap up duties from day to day, and vie performances, and though we do them as many times as the children of God; nay, though we could do them ten thousand times oftner than they, yet if we do them not in a *right manner*, if we know not the manner of the God of heaven, and earth with humble hearts, and self-denying spirits, with holinesse of affection, and with purity of heart: if a man do them not in a right manner, The Lord will tear him in pieces; and he shall have no deliverance for all that.

Use 2.
The reason why men regard the matter and not the manner of duties.

Another use shall be, *what may be the reasons why people are so willing generally, to do duties for the matter, and care not to do them in a right manner.* It shall not be amisse a little to shew the mystery of this thing: for we see every man is willing to do duties, every man will be praying, and coming to Church, many reprobates, and God knows how many carnall hearts are in this congregation, some drunkards it may be, some adulterers, some it may be that committed whoredome the last night, some that have been swearing even now, and deceiving in their shops, there are many carnall hearts: yea every man is willing to do duties, to hear, and to pray; Now what may be the reason that people are willing to do good duties, and yet are loath to come off with their carnall hearts? There are four reasons.

The first is this, *Because the matter of the duty is easie, but the manner is difficult.* It is an easie matter to pray, to say, *Lord, I have sin-*

Reas. 1.
The matter of duties easie.

ned against heaven, and against thee. Lord, I have sworn, I have been a drunkard, I have disallowed the Sabbath, I have done this and that, I pray thee pardon and forgive me, and give me thy grace; it is an easie matter to do this, It is *easie for a man to come to Church*, and mark what the Minister saith, and follow him from point to point, and it may be he go over it to his family. This is good, there are few that come thus farr. And so it is *easie to come to the Sacrament*, to take the Bread and the Cup, & to pray for a blessing, this is easie; but when a man comes to do a duty in a *right manner*, here is *difficuly*, when a man doth it with a *How; Take heed how you hear*. He doth not call upon people to hear, that is not the matter; there needs no great diligence for that: but, if you will consider *How you hear*, take heed to that. Here must be a great deal of circumspection; the soul must be marvellous painfull, a man must offer violence to his own soul; a man must fight against his own will, a man must beat down his own spirit, he must crucifie his own thoughts, must mortifie his own mind, and beat down his own soul. It is a hard thing to do in a *right manner*, as the Lord commands, if we consider how to do it. This is certain, flesh and blood cannot abide to take pains; if it can serve God with ease, and pray with ease, that it will do; but for a man to *weep* before God, for a man to *indict his heart* before the throne of grace, to *rend his bowels* before his maker, to *tear the caul of his heart* upon his knees,

knees, for a man to vow to God, and pay them; for a man to rid his hand of all the wages of iniquity, for a man to purifie himself as Christ is pure, for a man to wrestle with God, and to take grace according to the covenant of grace, with life and power, to do it in a right manner, here is religion, and this man cannot abide.

And so for the Sacrament, for a man to come in a right manner; Oh it is difficult to flesh and blood; for a man to go and examine all his life, to reckon up all his conversation, to anatomize himself from his cradle to this moment; to confesse how he hath sinned in his calling, in his family, in his shop, in his company, in his speech, and in his life; to go and judge himself of these, and condemn himself, and to accept of his own punishment, to go and wrack his own thoughts, and crucifie his own soul: Oh! this is hard, men cannot abide this: therefore they go and take the matter, they observe that, and leave out the manner.

Secondly, another reason is this, because the matter of duties may be done with a proud heart; there is no duty but a man may do it with a proud heart, and never be humble. A man may pray, and use good words, and make good petitions, and have marvellous good language, and Scripture phrase, and terms, and passages, and an admirall sweet tone, and yet have a proud heart. A man may come and Preach a Sermon, he may preach so as that he may strangely affect the hearts of the people, and may make all

Reas. 2
The matter of duties may be done with a proud heart.

the people wonder and admire at the gracious words that come from his mouth, and yet have a proud heart.

A man may hear, and hear oft, and hear the best Preachers in the City, and delight in hearing, and yet have a proud heart. A man may come to the Sacrament, & sit to ones thinking, as devoutly as any in the Church, and pray when the people pray, and give thanks when others give thank, and have a kind of morall faith in the Covenant, and a morall application of the promises, and yet have a proud heart. It is the manner of doing duties that humbles the soul, as St. Paul saith, *Acts 20. You know in what manner I have been with you: Why, what was the manner? In all humility of mind,* saith he, being among the Ephesians, preaching to them in a right manner, leaying them the example of his own pattern, doing all this in a right manner, he did it in *all humility of heart.* It is the right manner of prayer that pulls down the heart before God. It is the right manner of hearing the word, that makes a man melt at it. It is the right manner of comming to the Sacrament, that makes a man feel the comfort of God, and the promises of the Gospel, and to seek and find the admirable things contained in it. It is the right manner that makes a man walk lowly with his God.

Reas. 3

The matter of duties may be done, and yet a man be unholy.

Thirdly, another Reason is, *Because the matter may stand with an unholy life;* A man may do a duty for the matter of it, and yet be unholy,

holy. This is plain; how many thousands are there; that pray, and yet are vain, and covetous, and carnall? How many thousands hear Sermons, and yet are unprofitable? *Ever hearing, and never come to the knowledge of the truth.* If they were injurious before, they are injurious still; if they were consurers before, they are so still; if they were drunkards before, they are so still. A man may receive the Sacrament every month, and yet may have his lusts, and roll them as a sweet morsell under his tongue; he may delight in his secret lusts, and go on in his deadnesse of his heart. It is the right manner of worshiping God, that purgeth the conscience, and purifieth the soul, and makes a man that there is no room for his corruptions, as you may see, *1 Thess. 2. 10. You your selves know* (saith the Apostle) *how holily and unblamably we walked among you.* He speaks there of his manner of walking, and he saith to them, because it was in a right manner, it was an holy manner; such walking as excluded all unholinesse, and prophanesse. Flesh & bloud cannot abide this. Men, they love to pray, & be proud; they love to hear sermons, & to have their profit; they love to professe religion, and still to carry their secret lusts in their bosomes. People love this alife, *to go to Gilgall and transgresse, to offer Sacrifice every new moon, and every morning, & to find the labour of their hands,* this is right; but for a man to part with his iniquity, that is the thing that goes against the hair.

Reas. 4.
The matter
of duties
bring not
the crosse.

2 Tim. 2.
10.

Act. 15. 5.

The last reason is, *because the matter of duties bring not the crosse upon a man.* A man may do all the duties of Religion, and never be persecuted for it: a man may be as devout as the devoutest man under heaven, and yet no body hate him for it, except he be devout in a right manner, and worship God in a right manner. One man may reprove another that is wicked; A drunkard may suffer a drunkards reproof, & be never the worse: A whoremaster may serve his quean so, he may call her so, and yet not be spighted, because it is not right. It is the right doing of it that brings the crosse; as in 2 Tim. 2. 10. *Thou knowest thy manner of life.* It was that that brought afflictions and persecutions.

We may see to this very day many thousands that seem devout men in the Church, they will pray, and will hardly misse any time of prayer morning or evening, and yet they are far from being persecuted: nay, many of them are main persecutors of the Gospell of God, enemies to the crosse of Christ, adversaries to the Saints of God. We see it plain in Acts 15. 5. we read there of *devout women that raised persecution against Paul.* Mark, they were devout, and because it was *not in a right manner*, they persecuted the Apostles, and set themselves against them that were truly faithfull. Though wicked men do not love to pray aright, yet many of them are much for praying, they care not how much praying they have, and when they are at prayer, they will pray over from the beginning of the book

to the end, they love it alive. But if they come to a prayer that moves the heart, that ruffles the conscience, that dogges a man into his bosome, that lays a man flat on his face before God, they gnash their teeth at such a prayer. So they love Preaching too; I, it is true, if it be preaching that is flaunting, and glosing, with the enticing words of mans wisdom: but if a man preach to the conscience, if he preach the pure naked word of God, and carry it home to mens souls, this makes them gnash their very teeth, and they could eat the Minister of God for his labour. It is the right manner of duty that is accompanied with the crosse.

Thirdly, if we ought to be carefull to perform duties in a right manner, Let us be exhorted in the fear of God, to go and quicken all our duties, to bring a soul into (a many bodies; we have bodies of praying, and bodies of hearing, and bodies of receiving the Sacrament, and of good duties, let us get a soul into them, labour to do them in a right manner. The bare duty is like a carkasse. It is a Proverb of the Jews, Prayer without preparation, it is as a carkasse without the soul, that is, a loathsome thing; so is prayer without life, and without a right manner of pouring it forth. Let us labour therefore in the fear of God, to pray, and pray aright, to hear, and to hear aright; to seek God, and to seek him with all our hearts, aright, and to do every thing in the right way.

use 3.

To labour
to do du-
ties aright

Let

Motives
to perform
duties in
the right
manner.

1. Motive.
Numb. 11:
14.

Let us consider, first, we do not partake of any ordinance at all, except we do it in a right manner. I remember a fit place for this in Numbers 11:14. It is said there, *The stranger shall eat the Passeeover, and partake of it according to the ordinance, and the manner of it.* Where the text puts in the Ordinance of the Passeeover, and the manner of it. For it is all one, they are *Synonima's*. So the Ordinance in every duty, Gods ordinance in praying, in hearing the Word, in the Sacrament, in reproof, in every good duty, it is all one as the self-same thing. So that if we pray, and do not pray in a right manner, we have not prayed, we do not partake of the ordinance. So when we come to the Sacrament, the ordinance & the manner of it is all one; it is one compleat concrete action, we do not partake of it; except we partake of both.

2. Motive.

Secondly consider, *it is nothing but hypocrisie, when a man prays, and doth not pray in a right manner*; when a man doth any dutie to God, & not in right wise, it is nothing but hypocrisie. Mark how our Saviour Christ sets forth the hypocrisie of the Pharisee, Luke 18: 11. *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself,* he marks this manner of prayer; hee doth not say, *He stood and prayed this,* these words, but, *Thus he prayed*; he did not pray in a right manner, there was his hypocrisie, and that was the reason he went home not justified.

3. Motive.

Thirdly consider; *it makes the ordinance of God of no effect. Thus they make the commandments*

ments

ments of God of none effect, *Matth. 15. 6.* Hee speaks there of their duties that they did in a wrong manner, and their expounding the Scripture that they did in a wrong wise; and their sacrifice, their offerings, and tithings, their precepts, and many things that were all done after another fashion than God had commanded; therefore saith Christ, *Thus they make the Commandments of God of none effect.* So we make all the duties of Gods worship of none effect. Wee know there is never an ordinance of God, but it hath great effect if it be rightly performed. Prayer is of great effect, it is able to rend heaven, it is able to pull down God to the soul, it is able to wrastle out a blessing, to quicken the heart, to obtain of God every thing we want: but if a man pray not aright, a man may pray and go away never a whit the more holy, nor more quickened, nor nearer to heaven, nor comfort. So *preaching and hearing*, they are admirable Ordinances, what powerfull effects have they wrought when they have been done in a right kind? People have cryed out and been converted at them; and many a man hath been pulled out of the power of Satan to the Kingdom of Iesus Christ. They had royal glorious effects upon many thousand souls. But what is the reason that our hearing is so uneffectual? Because we hear not in a right manner, this makes the Ordinance of God of none effect, it makes Prayer of no effect, the Word of no effect, the Sacrament & Sabbaths of none effect;
you

you see people partake of these things, and are never the wiser.

Lastly, it cannot please God, it is *only* the right manner of doing duties that pleased God, as in 1. Thessalonians, 4. 1. As ye have received of us, How ye ought to walk, and to please God, Mark, there is the manner, That we may know *HOW* to walk, and by that to please God. It is not enough for a man to walk in good duties, that a man may do, and not please God: but (saith he) ye have received the manner *HOW* to walk and to please God. It is the manner *how* that pleaseth God. A man may walk to hell upon heavens ground, he may go to hell in the ways of God, it is possible. Suppose a man should go and take (if it were possible) all the surface of ground between this place and York, and lay it between this place and Dover, a man might go to Dover upon York ground: So many a man lays the ordinances of God in hell way: he walks in the way to hell, and there he lays his prayers, and there his hearing, and his good duties; he prays every day, and hears every day, and doth good duties every day, and yet *walks to hell*: he goes to hell on *heavens* ground; The reason is, because he doth the duty, and doth not observe the manner how he doth it.

Simile

The third thing is, the rule of direction, how we may come to the right manner of receiving the Sacrament, that is, by preparing of a mans self: and the preparation is here set down

down by the specification of it, namely, in examining himself, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

The generall scope of the words, and the Apostles meaning in them, is this, That,

Every man must prepare himself before he come to the Lords Table. **Observ. 1.**

I cannot stand on this, I will only name it.

As in the Sacrament of the Pascheover, there was preparation for the Pascheover. In 1o. 19. 14. it is said of the Disciples of Christ, that *they made ready the Pascheover.* In *Matth. 26.* they made the Lamb ready, and the room ready, and themselves ready, & the Table ready, and every thing ready. So in the Sacrament of the Lord Supper, wherein Christ is the true Paschall Lamb, when we come to eat of him, we must make every thing ready, *faith* ready, and *repentance* ready, & *interest in the promise* ready, and *hunger and thirst after these Spirituall ddinties* ready, every thing must be ready: or else like a man that comes into the field to battell, that hath not gotten his sword, nor his weapons ready, that is the way for himself to be killed; so it is when we come to the Communion, and have not all things ready, it is the way to be damned.

The Reasons of this are.

First, *because the Sacrament is an ordinance of God.* Now all the Ordinances of God require preparation, they are all spirituall, and naturally a man is carnall, and therefore cannot be prepa-

Every man must prepare himself before he come to the Lords Table.

Reason.
It is Gods ordinance

Simile

prepared. As it is with wood, there is is never a tree in the wood, but it is unprepared for building; Is there any tree in the wood of the fashion of a Chimney, or of a Lintall, or a Door? It must first be prepared, as it is in *Prov. 24. 27.* *First prepare thy work without, and then build thine house.* So every ordinance is to build a man up in the fear of God, in the grace of God, and in Religion: Now man is *naturally* unprepared for it; First, a man must fell his wood, and then cut it, and hew it even, and carve it, and plain it fit, and prepare it, before he build: So a man must hew down his own heart, he must humble his own soul, and qualifie all within him, and so be sanctified, before he be fit.

As for example: in prayer, a man must be prepared to prayer before he pray; he must prepare his heart, and then Gods ears will hearken to it. In *Psal. 10. 17.* The Lord will have the heart prepared before he hear the prayer. So it is with the word of God, a man must be prepared before he hear it: As a man that preacheth must be prepared before he preach, as *Ezra* is said to prepare his heart. *Ezra 7. 10.* *He prepared his heart to do the Law, and to teach it:* So a Minister cannot preach, except he be prepared beforehand, with a commission from God: with preserving knowledge, with a coal from Gods Altar, with a spirit of wisdom and understanding, with a Law of kindnesse in his lips, with meditation, and with a Theam fitted in his mouth for the people, he must be pre-

prepared with a *burning and a shining light*; or else he shall not *edifie* the congregation: So it is with all other Ordinances. For *humbling of a mans soul*; a man cannot humble his heart, except he be prepared to it, *Amos 4. 12.* Prepare to meet thy God, he speaks of humiliati- on. If a man would humble himself before God if he be not prepared, if his heart be not prepar- ed to let go the world, his worldly profits, and vain pleasures, and carnall acquaintance, his wonted lusts, and former delights. If he be not prepared to let these go, when he comes to keep a *Fast*, or to afflict his soul, and goes a- long to do the duty, to lay himself down be- fore Almighty God, if some lust or other will stick in his teeth, and intercept his heart, he shall never be able to doe it: as *Samuel* said to the people; *If you will turn to the Lord, prepare your hearts to do it*; 1 Sam. 7. So it must be in all the ordinances of God, and much more in the Sacrament.

Secondly, another Reason is, *because the Lord Christ hath made great preparations to provide the Lords Supper*; therefore we must be prepared to eat it. You know what a great deal adoe there was before the Supper was made. Christ must be incarnate, and fulfill all righteousnesse, he must conclude it upon his suffering; he must tread the wine-press alone, and suffer himself to be beaten and rejected of God, and men, and suffer death, the cursed death of the Cross, all these things were concluded upon,

R

before

Reason 2.
Christ
hath made
preparati
on for us
in the
Lords
Supper.

before this holy and blessed Supper was provided. *Come* (saith he) *I have prepared my dinner,* *Matth. 22.* Mark, Christ is faine to *prepare* his dinner, he makes a great Feast: there was great preparation for it; so there must be great preparation of our souls before we can come to this *holy banquet*. It is true among men, there may be great preparation for a feast, and little or nothing for the eating of it. Sometimes there are two or three days preparation for a Feast, and it is eaten presently. The reason is, because man naturally hungers after meat and drink, and he alwaies provides twice or thrice in twenty four hours, for eating and drinking: But the Lords Supper is a *spirituall banquet*, a man is every day, and hour, and moment naturally *unfit* for it, and there is much adoe to put an edge upon mens appetites; and a keenness upon mens desires, that they may be fitted and prepared for it.

Reas. 3.

Christ
looks for
good en-
tertain-
ment.

Thirdly, another reason is, *Because the Lord Christ, when he administers himself in this heavenly mystery, he offers to come into the soul, and he looks for good entertainment; and therefore of necessity there must be preparation for it.* You see when a mortall man, an earthly Prince, or a Noble man comes to another mans house, what a deal of preparation there is to provide for him: there is meat made ready, and purging the house, and sweeping the yard, and trimming up the very pales, and every thing, and making clean al the Chambers, and ridding out

out whatsoever fits it, & every thing that is out of order is set in tune. And, what will my *Lord* think? and what will his *Majesty* think? he will think he is slighted and contemned; And when he comes in, it may be, his own children shall serve, and his own wife wait at the Table; and there is running up and down of errands, and a great deal of adoe to give such a one entertainment. There is preparation to entertain a man, as Saint *Paul* said to *Philemon*, *I will that thou prepare me a lodging*: how much more when the eternall *God* shall come under a mans roof, and dine with him?

Lastly, *Because the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, is a part of Christs last will and Testament.* Now it is a terrible thing when we know our Lords will, and prepare not for the doing of it. Look in *Luke* 12. 48. he that knew it not, did things worthy of stripes; but in verse 47. *That servant that knew the Lords will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes*, that man shall be damned with much damnation, he shall be damned deeper than any body. Dost thou know the *Lords Table*, that this blessed Sacrament is part of *Christ last Testament*? and wilt thou not prepare thy self for it, to get an humble heart, and labour for a holy life, and seek for a thirsty soul, and vow upon new obedience, and enter into Covenant with the Lord *Jesus Christ*, for a better kind of conversation for the time to come? Wilt thou not go and examine thine

Reas. 4.
it is part
of Christs
last Test-
ament.

own soul, and go and reform whatsoever is amisse in thy family, in thy place and calling? Wilt thou not do these things to prepare for this holy will of Jesus Christ? thou shalt be damned deeper than any body else, because this is a part of Gods last Will and Testament, and thou knowest it, and therefore woe unto thee if thou prepare not for it.

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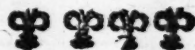
SET FORTH

In a SERMON preached,

By that Reverend and faithfull Mi-
nister of Gods VVord,

VVILLIAM FENNER, B. D.

Sometimes Fellow of *Pembroke Hall*
in *Cambridge*, and late Pastor
of *Rockford in Essex*.



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THE DUTY OF REPROVERS

And Persons reprov'd,

A Sermon preached by Master *william*
Fenner Minister of Gods Word.

Prov. 29. 1.

*He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his
neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that
without remedy.*



These words, by reason of the
ambiguity in the Hebrew
tongue, doe bear two *exposi-
tions*, and our English can suffer
but one.

The first exposition is this,
*He that reproveth another, and hardneth his own
neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without
remedy.*

remedy. The other is as we have it here translated, *He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*

I desire to speak of both these Expositions, for fear I should misse the true sence of this Text.

For the first, it is a truth of God every where confirmed in the Scriptures, *that he that reproves another, and yet hardeneth his own heart, he doth but make a rod for his own back, he puts sudden destruction upon his own self.*

Then Secondly, there is no hinderance from the context, but that this may be the meaning of the text: you know the Proverbs have little or no coherence, except two or three chapters. Indeed there is a coherence in them, but generally through the Proverbs there is none; so that if the text it self will bear one exposition as well as another indifferently, the meaning none can tell, but only as it is hit.

Thirdly and lastly, the Text it self favours this exposition; for so the word in the Hebrew is, *A man of reproofes, that hardens his own neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*

Now the Question is, Whether the wise mans meaning here be of the actuall reproof, the reproofing of another; or of passive reproof, this is undetermined which of these is meant.

A man can have no light from the coherence,
none

none in the world; and from the text it self, there is as much reason why we should expound it one way (even almost) as the other. So that I say, for fear I should let go the true meaning of the wise man. I desire to speak a little of the active sense. *He that often reproves another, and yet hardeneth his own neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.* From hence I may observe, that

A reprov'r (whether a master or a Minister, or a Magistrate, or a Father, or a private Christian, be he what he will be) that reproveth another, and yet is guilty himself (either in the same kind or else in another; or in any kind) & hardeneth his own heart in it, that man shall suddenly be destroyed without remedy.

Take a Preacher that preacheth strict doctrine to the people; that is very zealous against their sinnes. he is up with hell and damnation against their filthy courses: he preacheth for quickning, but himself is not quickned; he threatneth judgement against hardnesse of heart, and yet he hath a hard heart himself; this man puts destruction upon his own pate. He is like the Pharisees, that imposed upon others grievous burdens, and heavy to be born, but would not touch them with one of their finger themselves, Matth. 23. 4. The Reason of this is, because

First, such a reprov'r of sin, does it against his office: the office of a reprov'r binds him to be blamelesse as the Apostle speaks, *A Bishop must be blamelesse,* 1 Tim. 3. 2. Every Christian should

Observ. I
A guilty hardened reprov'r, shall be destroyed.

Reason I.
It is against his office.

should be blamelesse; how much more *Ministers* that bear the office of *reprovers*? they should be *blamelesse*. Nay, if a man, though he take not the office of a reprovcr, yet if he bear the *person* of a reprovcr (as every private Christian must when God calls him to it; for every man may be called to *reprove*) though he have no authority over another, though he be a private man, he may bear the *person* though not the office of a reprovcr. Now a man must be unculpable, and unblameable himself, or else he sinnes against his *person*. If a man reprove another for being carnall, himself must be spirituall, *Gal. 6. 1. If any man be overtaken with a fault, ye that are spirituall, restore him.* The reprovcr, the exhorter, and admonisher, must be *spirituall*, if he would draw another to be spirituall.

Reason 2.
He cannot
reprove
to a right
end.

— Secondly, *such a reprovcr as is guilty himself in that kind, or in any other kind, he can never reprove to a right end.* Why seest thou a mote in thy brothers eye, and considerest not the beam in thine own eye? *Matth. 7. verse 3.* Why (saith he) to what end? what is that thou lookest at? thou art severe to espye faults in thy brothers eye; To what end doest thou reprove him? What is the reason? What is the thing thou wouldest have, that thou findest fault with him? *Why seest thou a mote in thy brothers eye?* As if he should say, thy end can never be good, it cannot be to doe thy brother good: for then thou wouldest do thy self good first: It is not because thou hast sin;
for

for then thou wouldest detest thy own sin. It cannot be out of a good principle; or to a good end. It is either *because thou art a busy body* in other mens matters, or thou art *conferious*, thou lovest to be meddling; or *because thou hatest thy brother*, and wouldest wreak thy malice on him; thou wouldest fain shame and disgrace him, and by beating him down, get thy self up; or thou wouldest get a cover to *thine own conscience*; it must be some such end, it cannot be a good end. Christ puts it to a mans conscience, why he reproves his brother, when he is faulty himself.

Thirdly, another Reason is, *such a reprovver can never do it in a right manner*, as Christ saith, *Matthew 7. 4. How wilt thou say to thy brother, let me pull the moat out of thine eye, when behold a beam is in thine own eye?* How wilt thou doe it? in what fashion, or sort? How wilt thou be able to bring this about? A man that is a *reprovver*, had need to have a very clear sight of *his own*, that sees another mans faults, and will set another to rights, he had need to have a good judgement, or see all the *circumstances* of reprof, and rebuke, that deals with another. As long as a man hath a beam in his own eye, as long as he hath lusts in his own heart, that will *blind his judgement*, and darken & cover his eyes, and make him that he shall not be able to see to goe about it. How canst thou possibly say to thy brother, let me pull the moat out of thine eye, when there is a beam in thine own eye?

Reason 3.
Not in a
right
manner,

A man that is to *reprove another*; a Master that will reprove his servant, or a Father his children, or a Minister that will reprove his people, or a Magistrate that will reprove those that are committed to his charge, or any brother that will reprove another, he must do it with a *spirit of compassion*, with bowels of pity, with a sense and feeling: there is a great deal of wisdom and discretion to be observed in this act. Now when a man hath a beam in his own eye, how shall he be able to do it? That man that is faulty and guilty himself, either he must reprove *too harshly*, and rigorously, or *too sparingly* or *too insultingly*, he must do it in a wrong manner, it can never be sincerely and truly done, as long as a man hath a lust in his own heart, and he himself is guilty and faulty, that is a reprovor of his brother. Nay, the party *reproved*, is holpen to *retort* on him, *How dost thou sell me of pride, and wordlingnesse, and covetousnesse? Who is proud and covetous as thou?* Thus a man shall be ready to be hit in the teeth.

Reas. 4.
It is hypoc-
risie.

Fourthly, *such reprovor is an hypocrite*. It is no Christian reproof for a man to do so. Wilt thou go and find fault with thy servant for his laziness of thy service, when thou art lazie in Gods service? Wilt thou find fault with thy brother for his pride, and thou art full of fashions? Wilt thou condemn the finnes of the times, and thou livest in some lust? This is nothing but *hypocrisie*. Thou makest as if thou didst

didst stand so much for obedience to God; and oh there is *this* and *that* sin against God, when *thy* self, is a sinner in *that*, or in another kind, this, is *hypocrisie*, as Christ saith here, *Thou hypocrite first cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brothers eye. Thou hypocrite:* Mark, it is an act of *hypocrisie* when a man goes to find fault with another, before he has gone to redresse his own soul; to purge his own conscience, and have shook hand with the wages of iniquity his own self, before a man have done *this*, it is *hypocrisie* to deal with another. For when a man reproves another he takes a form upon himself of one that is zealous against sin, and an enemy to all sinful practises: Now what is this but *hypocrisie*, when a man hath this in him that he pretends? when a man finds fault with anothers pride, as if he were humble forsooth, with anothers wordlinesse, as if he were liberall; when a man doth so, he incurreth the guilt of *hypocrisie* in reproving another.

Fiftly, another reason is, *because such a reprover is inexcusable, his reproving another mans sinne, makes himself inexcusable of his own*, as the Apostle speaks, *Romans 2. 1. Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy self, for thou doest the same thing.* Mark, thy own mouth shall condemn thee; thou findest faule with another mans pride: it seems he is to be condemned for it, then God

con-

Reas. 5.
It makes
inexcusa-
ble.

condemnes thee for thy pride. Thy pride is a fair mark for Gods justice, because thou condemnest another. Dost thou find fault with anothers hardnesse of heart, and ill will and backwardnesse to any thing that was good, and yet thou art backward? Thou exposhest thine own soul to the judgement of God; thou hast taught (as it were) Almighty God how to condemn thee for thy own lusts and corruptions.

Reason 6.

It is absurd.

Again, sixtly, another Reason is this, *because such a reprovor is an absurd person.* It is absurd to reprove another, and be faulty ones self, as it is, Rom. 2. 21. *Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self? Thou that preachest another should not steal, dost thou steal?* This is a strange absurd thing, this reproof doth not sound well in thy mouth: thou stealest, and forbiddest stealing; thou preachest against adultery, and committest it; thou speakest against such and such sinnes; thou findest fault with them in the children of God, and art guilty thy self, or in thy children or servants, or neighbours, and art obnoxious to them in thine own practice: this is an absurd thing: these rebukes and reproofes sound not well in thy mouth.

Reas. 7.

It is impudency.

Lastly, it is a sign of impudency, Psalm 50. *What hast thou to do to take my covenant into thy mouth, when thou hatest to be reformed, and hast cast my covenant behind thy back?* And to the wicked God saith, *What hast thou to do to take my statutes or covenant, into thy mouth, since thou hatest instruction?* What hast thou to doe to

re-

reprove thy brother? If he be proud, what is that to thee, as long as thou art proud thy self? thou goest and slingest stones at him, sling them at thine own heart first. It is a sign of impudency.

But it may be objected, *Shall not a wicked Magistrate punish sinne, and a wicked minister preach against the corruptions of the times, and a wicked Master rebuke his Servants, and a wicked Father correct his Children? Because he is wicked himself, shall he make himself more wicked, and contract more guilt upon his soul?*

I answer, that such a man is in a dilemma; for the man is bound to reprove, in regard of his office, and yet he is bound in conscience to go and amend himself first. I say he is bound to reprove all those that God calls him to reprove, in regard of his office: but in regard of conscience he is bound to go and amend his own fault first. Therefore if he be a magistrate, such as sit upon life and death, *Nisi prius*, or any action between man and man, if he condemn a malefactor, and there remember himself guilty, he is bound in conscience to arise from the Bench, and go and amend his own sin. And we that are Ministers, when we preach to the people, and remember our selves guilty, let us lay our hands upon our mouths, at least *in votis*, before ever we have the face to go & find fault with the people, it is necessary it should be so; Therefore, I say, a man is in a dilemma, if he do
not

not reprove sinne, it is against his office, and the person he bears, when God calls him to it; and if he be reproved, then he sinnes against the command of God, that binds him to be blamelesse, this is to bear the place of a re-prover.

Use. I.

The Use of this is, first, to let us see that a man that reproveth (I speak not of Ministers only or of Magistrates, or Fathers, but of every man that reproveth, either by tongue, in word or in thought; if he find fault in his thought with another man for his sinnes, and his strange doings,) let him take heed he doth but putt a judgement upon his own head; he makes himself inexcusable, as in Rom. 2. 3. the Apostle there speaking of this very point, *Thinkest thou O man, that judgest him that doth these things, and doest them, that thou shalt escape the judgement of God?* A man that judgeth another and doth the same things, that man certainly shall not escape the judgement of God, as his brother doth not escape his judgement.

Use. 2.

To be unblamable
etc were re-
prove.

Secondly, another Use shall be for counsell to every man and woman (for it is every ones case) God hath called every one of us to reprove one another, Ministers to reprove the people, and Magistrates to judge between man and man, & every neighbour is to reprove when he is called thereto. Now let us mark and observe this rule, let every one of us labour with all care and conscience, to be unblameable, unoffensive, to humble our own souls, to cleanse our own consci-

consciences, that we may be able to perform this duty. Beloved we wrong our own souls, if we find fault with *others*, and suffer *our selves* to be faulty.

When *Paul* was to preach to the people, knowing that his office of preaching required *reproving*, you see, lest he should wrong his own soul, how he laboured to be unblamable, saith he, *I beat my body down, when I preach to others, lest I become a cast-away.*

Again as a man *wrongs his own soul*, so he *dishonours God*. It cannot be unknown what an unthankfull office, the office of a reprover is, the world cannot abide reproof, *The wicked hateth the reprover in the gate*, Isa. 29. 21. The world is full of scorners, that hate reproof. *Prov.* 15. 12. Though some men be not so wicked as to hate reproof, yet at least they think hardly of them that reprove; they think they usurp authority over them; and crow over them, or they undertake to be their betters; as a reprover undertakes in that thing to be a mans better. Now when a man is reprov'd he is apt to think that his neighbour crows over him, and exerciseth authority upon him, as if he would grow on him, and be his Iudge. You see *Lot* when he reprov'd the Sodomites, though as gently as ever he could *My breth'ren do not so wickedly*, presently for all that they thought hardly of him. *What, will this fellow be a judge that came but the other day to sojourn?* *Gen.* 19. Presently they thought hardly of him. So we see the Prophet, doth but find fault
S with

with *Amaziah* for his fault, and presently the Kings eyes are blinded, and his heart hardened, *Who made you of the Kings counsell?* 2 Chron. 25. 15. he thought him a medler, that pried into State-affairs, and into the Court and Kingdome. A man cannot reprove his brother for his sinne, but it is a thousand to one if his brother be not ready presently to pry into him, and to look narrowly into his ways, to espy a hole in his coat if he can, or to make one if he cannot: all mens eyes are upon him, and they look strictly and straitly, and if any thing in the world be amisse, they will be sure to mark it, and to make more of it, to make mountains of Mole-hills. When the blind man did but find fault with the Pharisees, & reprove them a little for persecuting of Christ, what say they? *Art thou altogether conceived and born in sin, and wilt thou teach us?* John 9. 34. Presently they looked on his blindness, and birth; Certainly he is a viler sinner than other men, and shall he go find fault with them? If we mean to reprove *another*, let us labour to be unblamable, to be Godly and holy, to reform our *own* wayes, let us be sure to purge our own families, to cleanie our *own* souls, to rid our own hands of all the ways of sinne and iniquity, lest God be dishonored. The word of God will be flung in his own face back-again, and the reproof, if it be never so sweet, and never so wise, it will be retorted in a mans own teeth, if he be not unblamable himself. And a man had need to be humble, and lowly, and gentle, and

and meek, and to put on all bowels, and gentleness of heart, if he will reprove.

All finnes are not to be reprov'd *alike*, some with *sharpnesse*, some with *lenity*. He is a Mountebank, that will open a vein for every wheal and pimple. The reprov'er is like them in *Isaiah*, when they deal with the Cummin and Fetches, a little rod will beat them out, but when they come to the Corn, Wheat, and Rye, they beat them out with the Cart-wheel: So when we meet with a hard-hearted spirit, we must use *stronger* corrosives to them, and gentler admonitions and rebukes towards others that sin with a lesser and a weaker hand. But this is a thing that a man must be marvellous carefull of that reprov'es. Nay, let a man be unblamable for the present, if he have been faulty before, if it were seven, or ten, or twenty years before, if it be known, it is a thousand to one, but he shall be hit in the teeth with it when he reprov'es: you committed adultery, and you did steal at such a time, if it were never so long agoe. Therefore St. *Paul* would not consent to take *Mark* with him in the ministry, *Acts* 15. because he had been offensive to the Church before. We had need to be *marvellous carefull* and wary if we *will* reprove.

I had thought to have named other Uses, but I leave this Exposition, and take it as it is passively interpreted.

Simile

He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

The second
exposition,

THough it may be expounded the other way, yet I rather incline to this. The Reason is.

Because this is the constant current of all interpreters generally. I meet but with one or two that expound it the other way; but all passively. He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, &c.

Secondly, because the word in the originall is, *A man of reproofs that hardeneth his own neck.* Now, though it be indifferent whether it be *active* or *passive*, yet look in the Scripture, and you shall find it more often *passive* then *active*. *A man of reproofs*, that is a man often reprov'd, in the *passive*. As in *Isa. 53. 3.* Christ is a *man of sorrows*, not making others sorry, but made sorry *passively*. And so in *Dan. 9. 23.* It is said Daniel was a *man of desires*, that is, not a man desiring other men, or other things, not *actively* desiring, but *passively*, desired, beloved of God exceedingly. So it is said of *Jeremiah*, *Jerem. 15. 10.* he was a *man of strife*, not a man striving with others, but a man *striven with*. So in *1 King. 2. 26.* A *man of death*, that is, not killing others, but to be killed himself. It is taken more frequently in the *passive* sense; and we may more boldly take it so. *A man of Reproofs*, that is, *reprov'd again and again*, that hath received divers reproofs, and yet *hardeneth his own neck*, shall suddenly be destroyed,

destroyed, and that without remedy. Here I might observe by the way, this point of Doctrine, That,

The Lord doth not destroy man willingly.

He saith not, A man shall be destroyed without remedy; but a man when he hath sinned against God, when he had committed sinne, and not only so, but when he is reprov'd for his sin, and goeth on. The Lord doth not destroy a man nakedly, but upon consideration of sin. *Willingly the Lord doth not afflict any*, Lament. 3. Mercy and punishment they flow from God, as the honey and the sting from the Bee; the Bee yeildeth honey of her own nature, but she doth not sting but when shee is provoked: So the Lord is gracious, and good, and favourable, and kind, & blesteth his people from his own nature, but he doth not punish, and plague, and destroy, but being provoked by sin and iniquity. I will not stand to follow this point, I let it go.

The text it self contains the great mercy of God in lending a man a reproof.

And what a great sin it is, what a great ill it is for a man to sin against his reproof. The greatness of the ill is set down two waies.

First, by the great sinfulnessse of the thing, it is called *the hardening of a mans own neck*.

Secondly, by the greatnesse of the punishment that God inflicteth upon this sin, and that is, he will destroy him, and that without remedy.

For the first, namely, what a great mercy it is for God to let a man be reprov'd for his sins.

The Lord doth not destroy men willingly.

God destroyes not but for sin.

Simile

Observa.

A great mercy to be reprov'd.

It ved.

It may be proved by many places of Scripture, onely I find Scripture is to be brought as an aggravation of sinne, when they sinned against reproof, *Hosea 5, 2.* saith he, *they are profound to commit sinne, though I have been a rebuker of them all.* As if he should say, though I have been so mercifull as to shew them the danger of sin, to tell them what would become of their wretched courses; though I have called them to repentance, and have given them warning what would be the issue of these things; yet for all this, for all my mercy, they have gone on in their sinnes, though I have reprov'd them. This *Though* is a word of aggravation, as we see in the speech of Daniel to Belshazzar; *Thou, O King, hast not humbled thy self though thou knewest this:* as if he had said, though the Lord let thee know the punishment upon thy Father, & the plagues of *Nebuchadnezzar* thy grand-father, though the Lord have let thee understand what it is for thee to exalt thy self against him; yet thou art not humbled; he aggravates his sinne; So, this aggravates a mans sin when he goes on, notwithstanding he is reprov'd. The Reasons are,

Reas. 1.
Reproofs
come from
love.

First, because when God reproveth a man of sinne, the reproof primarily comes out of love; therefore when he reprov'd *Laodicea*, and told her she was luke-warm, and said, *I would thou wert either hot or cold*, and since she was neither, he would spue her out of his mouth; he tells her whence the reproof flowed; because *I love, I reprove: As many as I love, I rebuke, Rev. 3. 19* It is not

not out of ill will that I tell thee of thy lukewarmnesse, and threaten to spue thee out of my mouth; I tell thee these things that thou mayst avoyd that ill; I say, Gods reproofs flow primarily from *love* to men, whereby he would have them lay aside their wretched courses, & avoyd the judgements, Nay, it is an argument of *hatred* when a man doth not reprove his brother of sin. If God let a man go on in sinne, and never tell him of his drunkennesse, nor never find faule with his pride and security, never convince him, or wound, or touch him, nor deal with him about his unquietted estate, and his rotten conditions, It is a sign God hates the man: but when God reproveth a man from day to day, Man thou art a proud creature, thou shalt to hel for thy pride, and hypocrisie, and security, and hardnesse of heart: When the Lord reproveth a man from day to day, this is an argument of *love*; the other is an effect of *hatred*, not to reprove; *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, saith Moses, but shalt in any wise reprove him, and not suffer sin to be upon him, Levit. 19. 17.* Thou hatest thy brother when thou seest him sin, and doest not warn him; and knowest he is guilty of sinfull courses, and doest not reprove him; and when thou hast time, and place, and opportunity, and fit circumstances to reprove, and yet thou wilt not do it, it is a sign thou hatest thy brother; it is the greatest degree of hatred on them. If a man deny food for the body, and let a man rather dye of hunger, than he will give him

Prov. 10.
17.

him meat, or let a man fall into a pit, rather than he will prevent the mischief, a man is guilty of *bodily* murder : but thou art guilty of the *soul* of thy brother, if thou let him fall into sin. Thou thinkest thy brother is harsh, he will not bear with thee, he is hasty and testy: no, thou art in an error, *That man that hates reproof, erreth*, saith Solomon. Indeed a man should not be too sharp, but first tell his brother in private that he is an error : for, *reproof* is a means of *grace*, it flows from great love, it is the providence of God that hath cast it about, that thou shouldest have reproof given thee; if thou have a heart to take it, It is an argument of love.

Reas. 2.
They end
to good

Another reason is taken from the primary end of reproof, which is to bring a man to good, to reduce him into a right way, to convert a man, to save his soul, that is the *primary* end of reproof and admonition : therefore to go on in sinnes contrary to it, must needs be a great evill. As Solomon brings in the wisdom of the Father, Jesus Christ, calling upon people, *O ye fools, how long will ye love folly ? turn at my reproof.* Mark what follows, to what end; *I will powr my spirit, on you.* There is the end he tells them. *O ye fools*, wretched people without understanding, that go on in sinne, and harden your own hearts, that repent not, nor turn not to God, that will not submit to his wisdom, nor imbrace his word : *ye fools*, that wrong your own souls, *oh turn at my reproof.* Why ? This is the reason that God reprove a man on this fashion, it is, that

that a man may have the Spirit of God granted him. If thou have an ear to *hear* reproof, and a heart to *drink* it in, and to wear it as a crown of gold on thy head; and as a chain about thy neck, thou shouldest have the Spirit of God for thy labour: the Lord reproveth thee that thou mightest return back, and have the Spirit, and have mercy and forgiveness. This is all the ill will that Gods Ministers bear thee, and all the hatred that reprovers shew, when they tell thee of thy sinnes whatsoever they be, that they may stop thy steps from going down to Hell.

When the Lord sends thee Sermon upon Sermon, Preacher after Preacher, thou art called on day by day, (as you hear in this place) This is the infinite goodness of God towards your souls; therefore your sinne is infinite great if you do not amend, as the wise man saith, *He that hates reproof shall surely dye, Prov. 15. 10.* there is no remedy for that man, that man that puts off repentance, God reproveth him from day to day, on the Sabbath day, and on the week daies; he goes to this man and there he is reprov'd, and to another, and there he is reprov'd, and yet he goes on in his deadnesse and formality in the ordinances of God, that man shall surely dye, there is no remedy, he sins against the infinite mercy of God.

Thirdly, *there is no reason in the world why reproof should be taken otherwise than with all willingness, and thankfulness, and cheerfulness*

Reas. 3.
It is brutish to reprove them.

Simile

fulnesse. If a man have but the *reason* of a man in him, he must needs take *reproof* in good part; he must be a beast that doth not judge well of him that reproves him. There is an excellent place, *Prov. 12.1. He that puts off reproof is brutish*; he that hates *reproof* is a brute, that man hath no reason in him. Art thou a swearer, & art reproved for it? thy brother tells thee thou wilt be damned for it; Dost thou chafe at that man? thou art a beast, thou hast no more understanding than an Oxe or an Asse. As it is with a horse, when the Ostler comes to rub him, he kicks with his heel, when he only beats of the dirt, he lifts up his hinder leg on him, and it may be wounds him: so thou hast no more understanding than a beast, that finds fault with one that reproves thee for thy sinnes. So that whatsoever thy sin be, he that tels thee of it, there is no reason in the world but that he should be a dear man to thee. We think of all men under heaven, godly Ministers that are faithfull in their place and calling, should be the dearest men to you upon the face of the earth. Why? because they reprove you, & tell you of your sins, & what will become of your souls, what will be the issue and Catastrophe of all your ways. You that come to Church every day, may read a Lecture in the Word of God, what will be your doom at the lay day: you are told of your pride, and adultery, of your whoredom, and oaths, carnall Gospellers of their secure and carnall condition, and common professors of their formality, & other
lusts

lusts that men are given to; you are told of all: I say, the feet of Gods messengers should be beautiful, you should hug the messengers, and put their reproofs in your bosomes, and let them have power and efficacy on your souls, and go and put them in practice.

The Use of this is,

First, is it so, that it is the infinite mercie of God to reprove men of their sinnes, to tell them of whatsoever is amiss in their hearts and lives? let me tell you, First, *see here what an infinite punishment God is bringing upon that Kingdome when he is taking away reprovers from them:* when God takes away reprovers, he takes away all mercy and loving kindnesse. Therefore God when he threatned to deliver up *Judah*, to curse that Kingdome, to plague them for their rebellion, and utterly to give them over, he saith he will take away the reprov'er; saith he to the Prophet, *Thou shalt be dumb and not open thy mouth, thou shalt not be a reprov'er to this people, Ezek. 3. 26.* When the Lord would curse that people and bind them over to a reprobate sense, and deliver them to wrath, the Prophet shall not be a reprov'er, he silences the Prophet. Or as *Piscator* thinks, the anger of God silenced him, or confin'd him to his house, that he should not prophesie. So when God silences his Ministers, that he takes them from a place, or threatens to take them away, it is a sign of heavie vengeance towards such a people. It may be wicked people laughed at them, and made it a mat-

Use I.
The misery to want reprovers.

or Angel

ter

ter of nothing, they were glad that *Ezekiel's* mouth was gagged, and it were no matter if the country were rid of a company of Puritans; though they had no such word then, they had as bad, they think all is well: but the time will come, that they will curse the day that ever they provoked God to take away their Ministers; we enjoy them by the mercy of God, other places have lost them, God knows how soon we may lose ours. In *Hosea* 4.4. the Lord, there, when he would set out the desperate estate of the children of *Ephraim*, delivers them up to such a state and condition, that none should reprove them, *Let none reprove another*. If they will sinne let them: If they will go on in Idolatry, let them; If they will harden their own hearts let them; if they will dye in sinne, let them; if they will perish, and be damned for ever, let them. *Let no man reprove another*. It is a lamentable state.

Generally, people are glad when the Land is swept of all the good Ministers, & the good servants of God: they had rather hear a fine song in a Pulpit, of one that preacheth morally, or it may be preacheth his own self, or the like, but the time will come, when they shall say as *Solomon* saith, *It is better to hear the reproof of the wise than the song of fools*, *Ecclesiastes* 7.5. people love alive to hear the song of fools. When a fool comes comes up and preacheth, *At what time soever a sinner shall repent of his sinne*: And, *Be not just over much*; and what need such ado? Here is more purther than need, & abuse places, & wrest

wrest Scripture. As for example, *the thief on the Crosse* was saved at the last with a word or two; and they bring the example of the *Publican*, that cryed, *God be mercifull to me a sinner*, & went justified to his house rather than the *Pharisee* that made long prayers. And tush, what need men be so zealous, and precise, and puritanicall, *Whosoever calls upon the name of God, shall be saved*: people love alive such songs of fools: but the time shall come when peoples eyes shall be opened, and their consciences awakened, and then they will wish, O that we had heard the reproof of the wise!

The second use makes against those that despise the reproof of the wise, yee despise not men but God; yee have despised me, Prov. 1. 30. You think you despise a poor Minister, he is strickt, and harsh with your souls, and presseth these things upon your consciences, and it may be, more than he hath warrant to do: so you think you do not despise God, but only the Minister: Nay, saith Christ, *you have despised my reproof*. When you despise them that Christ sends, you despise him. This is an expresse and an explicite sign of a mans everlasting destruction, when he despiseth reproof, as in that speech of the Prophet to *Amaziah*, *I know that the Lord hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast not hearkened to my reproof*, 2. Chron. 25. 16. So I may say, I know that God hath determined to destroy a Nation, a City, or people, when they will not take counsell of Gods Messengers, when they will not hearken

Vse 2.
Against
despisers of
reproof.

hearken to instruction: They have been called upon, nationall sinnes have been ripped up, parochiall sinnes have been spoken of, yet when they are told, they will not be reprov'd. We that are the Ministers of God, know that God will destroy as many as turn not at reproof. I let this passe.

I should now show the *grevousnesse* of this ill of standing out against reproof: it is expressed two ways.

The grievousnesse of standing out against reproof.

First, in the *sinfulnessse* of it, *to harden a mans heart.*

Secondly, in the *punishment*; *He shall be destroyed without remedy.* And in the *destruction* you may see here,

First, the *unexpectednesse* of it, *He shall be destroyed suddenly.*

Secondly, the *totalnesse* of it, *He shall be destroyed.* The word signifies to shatter all in peeces.

Thirdly, the *irrecoverablenesse* of it, *without remedy.*

Fourthly, the *suablenesse* of it, his punishment is according to his sin. Mark, as he hardened his own heart against God, so God will harden his heart against him; as no remedy would turn him from his sin, so no remedy shall turn God from his wrath: As his sin was in hardening his heart like a stone, so God shal deal with him as a stone is dealt with, he shall destroy him. The word in the *originall* signifies *broken to peeces as a stone is broken*, that is, the Lord will deal with him just in

in his own kind. Hence I might observe this doctrine, that,

The Lord proportions punishments to mens sins. *Doct:*

Iust as a mans sin is, so is the punishment. *David* sinned in numbering the people, *2 Sam.* 24. 15. & God punished him in that; *Pharaoh* sinned in destroying and drowning the males of the *Israelites*; God smote his first-born: He drowned their babes, and he himself was drowned in the sea. I might bring abundance of examples.

Now the *Reasons* of this are,

First, *because hereby a mans punishment appears to be so much the more equall and worthy.*

Retaliation is a most equall punishment to the sin; there is no inequality in it but this, that it is too mercifull, *An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, burn for burn, wound for wound.* You know an eye is equall for an eye: so when God punisherh a man iust in his own kind, *quid* for *quo*, that as there was no remedy would turn him from his sin, so there shall be no remedy shall turn God from his wrath, Herein Gods punishment appears the most equall, *Revelations* 16. 5, 6. *Thou art righteous, O Lord, in that thou judgest thus, for she hath shed the blood of thy Saints, therefore thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.* Thou thirstedst after blood, ther it is for thee: so this is most equall, when men have dealt thus and thus with God, when God shall deal so and so with them, they cannot find fault. When a man drinks as he brews, and reaps as he sows, and finds as he brings, what inequality

God proportions punishments to sins.

Reas. 1.
To shew the equity of the punishment.

lity is here? *It shall come to passe, that as when I called they would not hear, so when they call I will not answer, Zach. 7.* When God calls upon thee, and thou wilt not hear, afterwards when thou callest for mercy, if he do not hear thee, it is just.

Reas. 2.
It stops
a mans
mouth.

Secondly, another reason is, *because this stops a mans mouth, it convinceth a mans conscience;* when a mans conscience finds that he is served in his own kind, that he is paid in his own coin, it stops his mouth. *Adonibezek* he had cut off the thumbs and toes of 70. Kings: afterwards he was served just so as he had dealt with others; he had cut off their thumbs and toes, & made them gather orts under his table, so afterwards his thumbs and toes were cut off. Now mark what his conscience saith, *Judg. 1. 7. As I have dealt, so God hath dealt with me.* As if he had said, God knows wherefore the children of *Indah* have done this: they know not why they cut off my thumbs, and the reason why they cut off my toes: God knows what they looked at in punishing me thus: but Gods just providence hath dealt thus with me, in this kind I served others. This is so palpable a punishment, so equall and just, that though the sin were committed twenty years agoe, yet a mans conscience will find out his sin twenty years after. As *Iosephs* brethren sold him, and after cast him into a pit, two and twenty years after, when *Ioseph* was harsh with them, see what their conscience saith; *Doubtless we are guilty of our brothers blood, when*

we saw the anguish of his soul, and he besought us, and we would not hear. As if they had said, What is the matter why the man is thus harsh? He never saw us before, why should he be so harsh, and we be strangers? Nay, saith conscience, you are well served, remember you were harsh to your brother, if you dealt so with him, marvell not if you be dealt so with. And after, when they came to their Inn, and found their money, they wondred, *What is this that God hath done?* Their conscience, I warrant you, hit them in the teeth: without doubt they thought the money that they took for selling of their brother had haunted them as a Ghost; did not we pay the man money for his corn that we bought? Nay, saith conscience, you are rightly served, here is the money you sold your brother for, (though it were not so) without doubt conscience upbraided them. Naturally we are apt to find fault with Gods judgements, and quarrell, but when conscience sees the equity of them, we have nothing to say.

Thirdly, all the standers by may see the equity of it, when the punishment is according to the sin: Nay, Divinity makes this Argument, that there is a God to judge the earth, because men are punished in their own kind. I will shew you one example of *Abimelech*, that wretch, that slew seventy of his brethren upon one stone, *Judg. 9. 7.* afterward when he came to stand under the Tower of *Abel*, a woman flung a piece of a millstone upon his head, and killed him: This was strange, all the standers by

might say, that *Abimelech* should be killed with a stone: no question the woman thought nothing, she flung the stone because she had nothing else to sling; it was strange that it should hit him so pat, it might have hit another as well as him, the stone might have fallen to the ground as well as on him; and that it should be by a woman, and a millstone too: Millstones are not used on the top of a Tower, and a millstone broken that a woman could lift it, and that he should be killed by a millstone and not with a sword, nay, might all the standers by say, 'Tis his God hath done, he was the sonne of a strange woman, and a woman hath killed him; he killed his brethren upon one stone, and now a stone hath killed him; all the world might be able to say, This God hath done.

The Use of this is,

First, let no creature in the world complain of Gods dealing, if he punish us according to our kind: he that *kills with the sword shall be killed with the sword*. He that stops his ears from hearing the poor, what shall his punishment be? He shall cry and not be heard. He that shows no mercy, now shall he be punished? He shall receive no mercy, James 2. 13. *Woe to thee that spoylest, and wast not spoiled: when thou ceasest spoiling, others shall spoyl thee*, Isa. 33. 1. Judge not, (saith Christ,) what if I do? Then thou shalt be judged. Thus God recompenceth the fruit of a mans doing. Here is no *Mimus* can complain; no *Aristarchus*, that can find fault with the justice and judgement of God.

Second-

Secondly, *It is not amisse to consider and see how God proportions punishments to sins*

In { *Kind,*
Quantity,
Quality,
Time,
Place, and other Circumstances.

In *Kind*; *He shall eat the fruit of his own wayes*, that is, he shall be punished in kind. It is a similitude from a tree, every tree brings forth according to its own kind; if it be an Apple-tree, it brings forth Apples; if a Crab-tree, Crabs; a Pear-tree, Pears; So every sinner shall be punished in their kind, a Minister shall be punished in his kind, wicked Masters in their kind, Servants in theirs, Rich in theirs, poor in theirs: If a man be a drunkard, he shall be punished in one kind; if he be an adulterer in an other: *Every man shall eat the fruit of his own wayes*. Every sin brings an homogeneal punishment, according to the nature of it. I cannot stand to follow this, though it be very clear in Scripture.

Secondly, it is in *Quantity*; God proportions the punishment according to the sin; he that *sowes sparingly*, shall reap sparingly; but he that *sowes bountifully*, shall reap bountifully. *Little sins, little punishments*; and *great sins, great punishments*. There are little sins, moat sins, gnat sins, and there are Camel sins; so there are little and great punishments, some meet with

many, some with fewer stripes. Just according to a mans sins; so the Lord shapes out the punishment, for great sinners, great plagues, and for every one according to his own measure. God hath a pair of ballance that he mean to weigh men in: As he weighed *Belshazzar*, so he will weigh thee, and look how much sinne thou puttest in one scale, so much punishment God will put in the other; He will not abate thee one oath, not one idle thought, not one breach of the Sabbath, not one neglect of hearing the Word, or of other duties: the Lord will put wrath in one ballance, as thou puttest sin in the other; he will make the scales even to a haire: as he dealt with *Belshazzar*, *He will lay righteousness to the line*, and judgement to the plummet, and weigh thee out in the scales, and thou shalt have just according to thy sins.

As the Lord deals with his own people, he will not abate so much as a cup of cold water, but it shall be rewarded; he will reward all, from the greatest to the least: so he will deal with the wicked, there shall no sin passe unpunished.

Again, there is a proportion in the *Quality*. If *Adam* sin in eating, he shall be punished in eating; if the women of *Judah* sin in apparel, they shall be punished in apparell, *Isa 3. 24* In *Wis. 11. 16*. *A man shall be punished in that that he sins in*, If *Absalom* sin in his hair, he shall be punished in it; *Nebuchadnezzar* might find his sin in his brutish condition, and the Prodigall might find his sin in the Hog-trough: so if thou find

find thy self in want, consider if thou hast not wasted thy means, if thou hast not been vain in building, and prodigal in spending, or gaming, or unnecessary bounty, and immoderate liberality beyond thy means: Art thou punished in thy Trade, or Children? &c. see if thou hast not sinned in them: for where there is sin, God will proportion the punishment to the sin.

Fourthly, God proportions the punishment to the sin in regard of the time. The same hour that *Belshazzar* was drinking and quaffing in the Temple, the same hour the hand of God was upon him; if it be not upon thee the same hour, it may be to morrow at the same hour. It may be thou hast sinned this day at such an hour, it may be God may strike thee to morrow at the same time, or this day seven-night, it may be the next year. *Nebadnezzer* was warned of his pride this year, and the same time twelvemonth the Lord drove him from among men. So in *Acts* 13. 42. one Sabbath day the Jews heard *Paul* preach and went out before the Sermon was quite done, they were not able to stand to the blessing; the same day seven-night the Lord made the Apostles shake off the dust of their feet against them, and leave them to a reprobate sense.

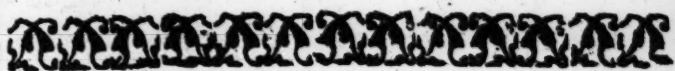
Fifthly, the Lord proportions his punishments to the place. It is strange many times, that the drunkard should get his death in the same Ale-house where he got his liquor. In *Judg.* 7. in that story of *Oreb* and *Zeeb*, *Oreb* at the rock *Oreb* devised against the Children of Israel,

Israel, and upon the same rock he was killed; And *Zeeb* another persecuter of the Children of God; so the Psalmist calls them, he at the Wine-presse of *Zeeb* took victuals from the children of Israel, and in the same place his own life was taken away.

Just as Judges and Magistrates at this day, they hang up men where they have done the villany. As they do with Dogs and Cats, they carry them to the place, to the Cellar or the Buttery where they doe the mischief, But the beasts themselves though they have no reason, are able to pick out the meaning of it. The Lord punisheth sinners in the same place. Here where thou hast been deaf to hear the word of God, when thy heart riseth against the Preacher, in the same place (it may be) the Lord will deliver thee up to a Reprobate sense. In the same place, at the Lords Table, where thou commest unworthily, thou shalt eat and drink thine own damnation.



FINIS.



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